

WORLD FAMOUS STORIES IN HISTORIC SETTINGS



WESTERN EUROPE

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WORLD FAMOUS STORIES IN HISTORIC SETTINGS

THE NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE

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By

SUSIE M. BEST

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WORLD FAMOUS STORIES IN HISTORIC SETTINGS

**THE NATIONS OF WESTERN
EUROPE**

BY

SUSIE M. BEST



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FOREWORD

It is a rare pleasure to see the world stories which every child should know put in this delightful form, where they may be equally accessible to schools and libraries and homes.

It has been my good fortune to sit and listen to many of these stirring tales, as this remarkable storyteller carried her eager audience of boys and girls in rapt attention from episode to episode; and also to stay to the symposium afterward and hear the children's exclamations of approbation or disapproval of the different characters, and their animated discussion of the various ethical questions that were raised. I have never seen anything like it anywhere else. It seemed to me I could see standards of conduct emerging out of the nebulous haze of childish ideals, and character taking form under her magic spell.

The author also has a literary touch that is rare even in the best teachers. Her pen talks with colloquial flavor and there is a personal and intimate quality in her style that holds us throughout the story, though we may have heard it often before. She throws in enough background to her stories in the way of fact and environment to give her characters atmosphere which is usually lacking in story books.

This characteristic has an important effect: The great story will take hold of the imagination of the

children and will make an indelible impression on the memory—and in remembering the character, the environment will go with it, like the setting of the picture. Thus the children, in getting acquainted with a few of the great legends of the ages, get also a familiar acquaintance with the great civilizations out of which ours has sprung.

Historical perspective is usually lacking in the study of American history, but children who read or hear these stories will never afterward have the impression that Columbus was the first man or that the world was discovered in 1492. It is only as we see facts in their relations that they are really understood. After these books, the children will recognize the roots of our own civilization as reaching far back into the cultural epochs of the past.

But more important even than this is the enrichment of the children's own lives that must come by familiarizing them with the worthiest traditions, the choicest sentiments, the rarest arts, and the greatest ideals that have come down to us on the stream of time.

In these stories lie the basal ideas, ideals, and characters that form our literature, our history, and our ethical notions—in short, our civilization.

The children who are nourished on such fare as this will be forever different from what they were before. As their imaginations are thus quickened and they catch the vision of the world and our own favored place in it, they will doubt not—"through the ages one

increasing purpose runs, And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

I consider, therefore, that these stories, or stories such as these, are the rightful inheritance of every boy or girl of twelve to fifteen years of age, and that they should be read in every grammar school as precursor and companion to literature and American history, or as a substitute for the usual vapid ethical story in the morning exercise period.

FRANKLIN B. DYER,
Superintendent of Schools,
Boston, Mass.

To the Reader:

The studies and stories in these volumes are of unique educational value. The stories are especially a delightful weaving together of fact, fable, fiction and legend, in picturesque though simple language. Able story-tellers are far too scarce. We owe a debt of gratitude to anyone possessing the power of presenting in written form a tellable tale—one that may even be read aloud verbatim and carry at the same time the rare charm of a tale that is told.

Susie M. Best is an inspired story-teller. With a practically inexhaustible fund of information at her command, a vocabulary suited to young folk, and hence to old as well, and a personality vividly responsive to the spirit of the tale, she has succeeded in doing an exceptional thing. She has caught the story-telling spirit, held it captive, and sent it to you bound in the beautiful phraseology of which she is past master, for you to liberate to the lasting benefit and inspiration of both reader and listener.

I have heard these stories told to classes. I have read them again in manuscript. They are written as they were told. For a number of years Miss Best has been at Dyer School in charge of the sixth year history work. There has never been a time in all her service that the children did not hail the advent of the story period with delight, and greet its closing with sincere regret.

The great value of Miss Best's work lies in the fact that the cultural and ethical effect of her stories is both immediate and perennial. I have seen the worst boy in the class sit (literally) at her feet, eyes ashine, mouth agape, interest aflame; his better nature on the outside, and all thoughts of wrong or mischief quiescent.

Every former pupil coming back to Dyer School as a visitor asks for a chance to sit again in Miss Best's room and hear once more the stories he heard and loved while still a student.

I have but two more things to say: I envy you your first reading of these stories. That you have never heard Miss Best tell one of them is your loss.

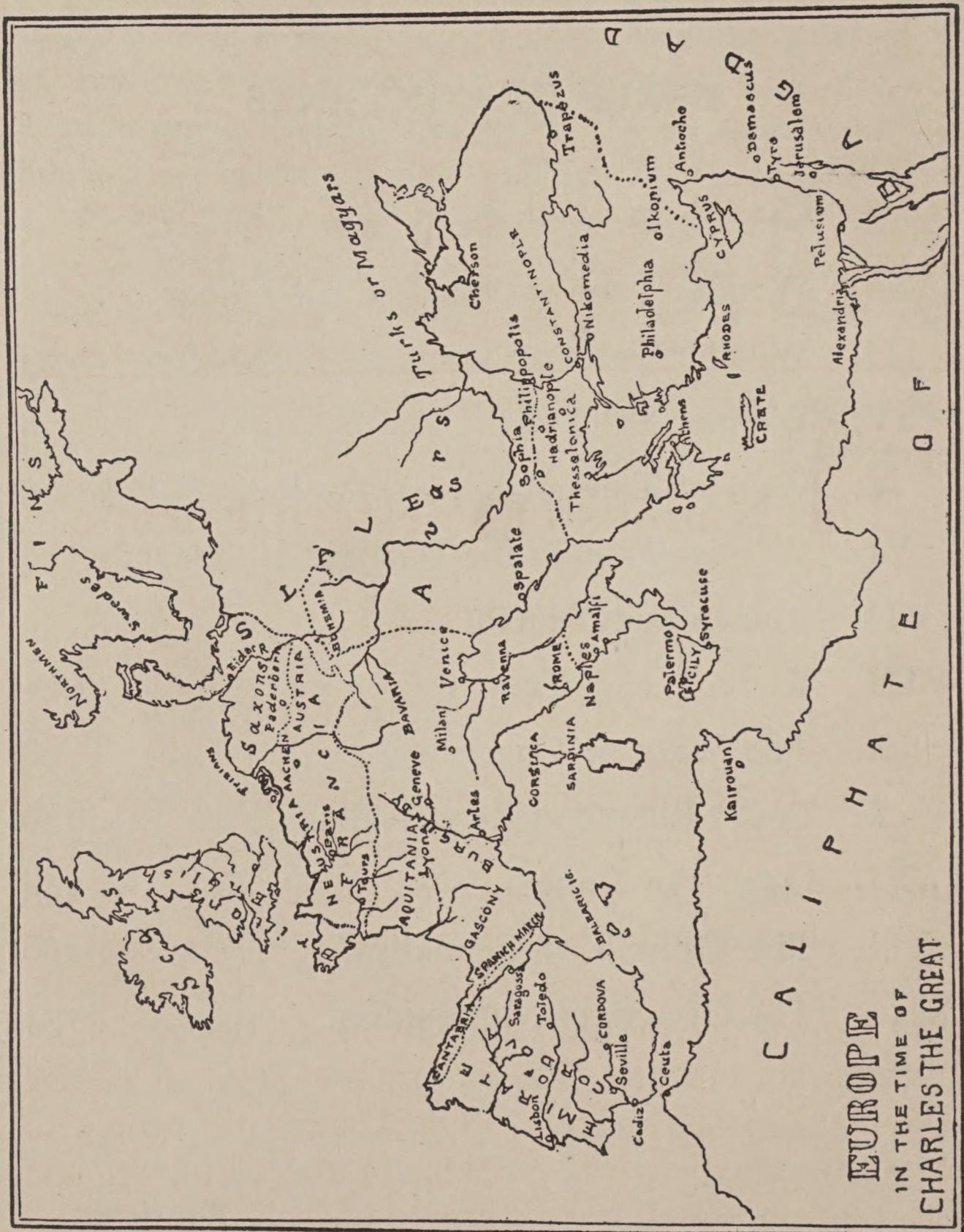
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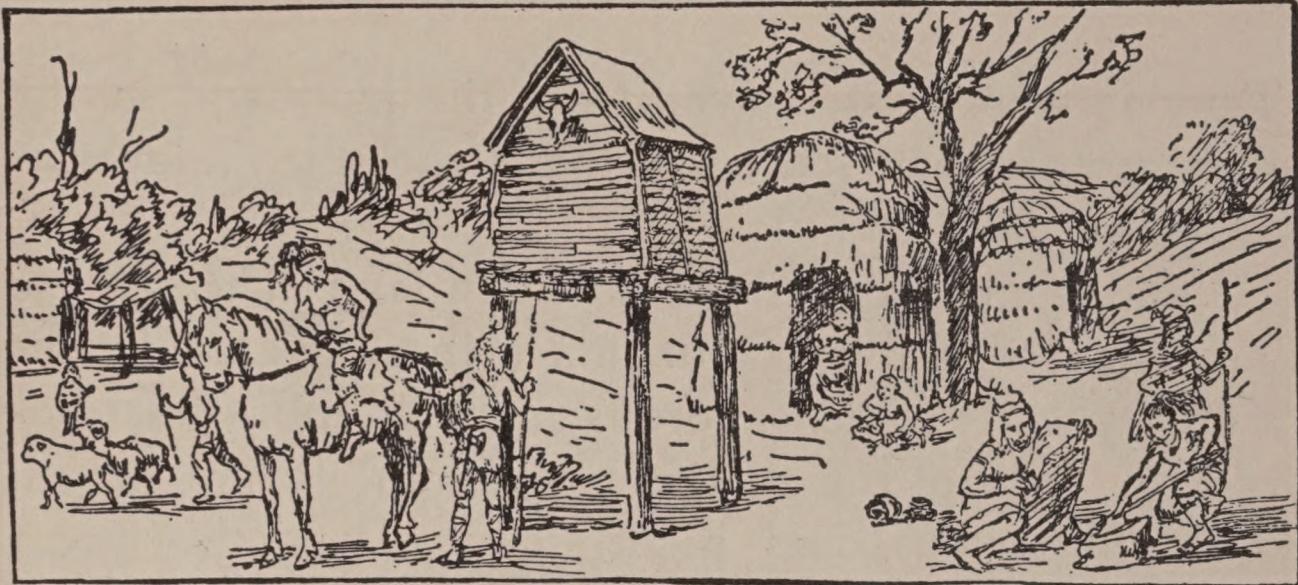
Principal Dyer School,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

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A German village.

The Nations of Western Europe

CHAPTER I

THE CHILDREN OF THE WOODS

TO-DAY at the name Teuton (tū'ton) a vision of Germany arises, but in these stories the name embraces much more. The Germans are Teutons, of course, but many other peoples are of Teutonic blood also. In olden times the names Teutons and Germans were applied to any of the tribes living in the region of Europe west of the Rhine (rīn) and north of the Danube (dan'üb) rivers. The Danes, the people of Norway and Sweden, the Dutch, the Germans, and the English are all of this great family. The English are descendants of the Angles and Saxons, tribes of

Teutons who crossed over from the mainland in the fifth century, and settled in the island, then known as Britannia (bri tan'i ä).

The Romans called the northern land in which the Teutonic tribes lived Germania (jer mā'ni a). It was a dreary waste of dense forests and wild morasses (mō-răs'es). One of the chief rivers was the Rhine, broad, deep, impetuous, and picturesque. Over this great northern plain icy blasts swept from the Arctic regions, for no friendly mountain barrier interposed a front to stay them.

The long, cold winters, fog and rain, ice and snow, and all the hardships they entail upon a wandering race, developed the Teutonic forest children into an active people, the very personification of health and strength, huge-bulked, lofty-statured, and full of energy. Unhampered by the restrictions of civilization, they became brave, self-reliant, and thoroughly imbued with a love of liberty that is still the most marked characteristic of their descendants.

These Teutons were a handsome people of the blonde type, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and rosy-cheeked. The women, tall, straight, deep-bosomed, were fit mates for the men, and often accompanied them to battles, sometimes even fighting in the fields. War was a common experience, for contests for hunting grounds and farm lands led to much fighting.

In times of peace, the men followed the chase and the women tilled the soil, platted wool into cloth from

which they fashioned their garments, managed the homes, and cared for the children.

An early Teutonic home was simple and uninviting. In summer it was a rude tent-wagon or log hut. The advantage of the tent-wagon lay in the fact that when pasture failed in one place it was easy to hitch the oxen to the wagon and move the whole homestead to a more desirable locality. In the winter seasons the people abandoned the tent-wagons and went into winter quarters, which were simply holes hollowed out in the ground.

The domiciles (*dōm'i sīls*) were scantily furnished; a bench and a bear-skin for a bed, a table and a few stools being the chief articles used. There were no rugs, no draperies, no curtains, no bric-a-brac. Yet, in such a home, simple as it was, dwelt the spirit of true hospitality. The door was always open, and the wandering wayfarer was made welcome to the best that was to be had.

These people were not entirely virtuous, however, for they were addicted to the vices of gambling and drinking. They often spent their nights quaffing freely the home-brewed ale which was served in great ox-horns or cups formed from the skulls of enemies. Their passion for games of chance was so great that it was no rare occurrence for a man who had lost everything else to stake his personal liberty in a final throw of the dice.

However, they did not descend to the baser vices

of the Romans. They kept their family life pure, and, although a wife was subject to the rule of her husband, she was held in high honor. Every Teutonic woman was supposed to be a prophetess and possess the gift of foresight. Some of them were warrior-women and made the war-songs of the tribe, or the primitive hymns with which they invoked the gods.

In early times these Teutons did not live as one people under one ruler. Instead, they were broken up into a vast number of tribes of varying strength, each subject to its own ruler, who was chosen by the people.

The office of king was not hereditary, though the choice was usually confined to some noble family, supposed to have descended from Odin (ō'din) or Wotan (Wō'tān), the chief of their heathen gods. This traditional royal ancestry naturally insured great respect for the kings.

The people were divided into classes; each tribe had its nobles, next in rank to the king. Then came the freemen, forming the bulk of the tribe, and distinguished by their long locks—the badge of their freedom. The Freemen had the right to carry weapons, serve in war, and vote in the assembly. Last of all, and of least account, were the slaves, or thralls (thrals), whose close-cropped hair and collar of servitude marked their base condition. These slaves were the absolute property of their masters and could be bought and sold at will.

The tribes dwelt in scattered villages. Each mem-

ber had his own household, but the land was held in common and was divided into sections called Marks. Part of each Mark was cleared for farming purposes, and part was used as pasturage for flocks and herds. A certain tree, distinguished by the figure of an eagle, and called the Mark Tree, stood like a sentinel between two Marks and indicated the boundary line. If anyone from either section dared pass the Mark Tree without sounding a horn the penalty was death.

Each Mark had a local court by which local laws were made and local disputes were settled. The general laws for the entire tribe were made by a general assembly of which all freemen were members.

The gathering of an assembly was a great event. It was held in the open air under some sacred tree. All the freemen who attended wore full armor, and each man carried his shield and his drinking vessel,—an ox-horn or a skull-cup,—from which to quaff the mead.

After discussing the questions to be decided, the votes were cast. All who favored the measures clanged their weapons and shields noisily, while those who dissented filled the air with sepulchral (sē pūl'kral) groans. This was a strange method of election, and yet the very right to appear at that assembly and take part in it was the germ of the present-day ballot.

The tribes had a set of unwritten laws which were taught by word of mouth. Infringement of these laws

was followed by arrest and trial. Their forms of trial were by oath and by ordeal.

In the trial by oath a certain number of men of the same rank as the accused testified as to his innocence. If he could get the required number of vouchers to appear for him, he was vindicated. Of course, in this way a really guilty person often escaped. The number of vouchers required varied with the rank of the accused. A noble needed fewer than a freeman, and a serf needed such a large number that he could seldom provide them.

The trial by ordeal was a test. If the accused protested his innocence, he was forced to prove it by plunging a naked arm into boiling pitch, or water, or oil, or walking barefoot over red-hot coals or irons. If his wounds healed in a certain time, he was innocent; if not, the verdict was guilty.

Sometimes the culprit had a private conference before the bar of justice and the presiding judge, and, in consequence, when the time of test arrived, the means of trial, supposed to be red-hot, would only be luke-warm, and thus the innocence of the prisoner was at once established.

Punishments were made by fines. *Wergeld* (ver'-geld) was a term used to denote the money value placed upon a man's life. The wergeld varied according to the rank of the slain individual; a murdered noble's wergeld was of considerable value, while that of a slave's was less than the fine for a slain ox or horse.

The Teutons were natural warriors. Their very religion taught them that to die on the battle-field was the most honorable death. A chief or leader was always a man who had distinguished himself by conspicuous bravery in war. Such a hero was placed upon a shield and lifted high in the air. Then, with clash of arms and shouts of acclaim, he was hailed as chief, his admirers vowing by Odin and Thor (tôr) to follow, let him lead where he would.

The early Teutons, like all other primitive people, worshiped many gods. Nature, with her varied aspects, is always an incomprehensible marvel, and her seeming mysteries symbolized (sim'böl ized) to these people mighty beings that became gods.

All the Teutonic nations worshiped the same gods and believed the same stories concerning them. These stories are preserved in wild chants or poems, called sagas (sā'gáz), which were composed by poets called scalds (skalds). These sagas were guarded in a peculiar way and came to light in a strange place. Many years ago certain of the northern Teutons of Europe, to escape the oppression of their conquerors after a war, fled to the island of Iceland. Here they kept their old faith and made their sagas in honor of their gods.

Iceland suited the wild stories. Thomas Carlyle, a great British writer, gives us a beautiful description of Iceland. He tells us it is "a land, burst-up, the geologists say, by fire from the bottom of the sea; a

wild land of barrenness and lava; swallowed many months of every year in black tempests; yet with a wild, gleaming beauty in summer-time; towering up there, stern and grim in the North Ocean; with its snow giants, roaring geysers, sulphur-pools, and horrid volcanic chasms, like a waste, chaotic battle-field of frost and fire."

We scarcely expect to find in this land that a written record was kept, but such was the case. In early Christian times, a priest named Saemund (sā'mönd), who was teaching in Iceland, became acquainted with the old sagas and wrote them down. His book is called the "Elder Edda" (ed'ä). About a hundred years later another man wrote a prose account of the stories. His book is called the "Younger Edda." It is from these books we gain an insight into the religious belief of the early Teutons.

Looking through the stories we see clearly that they were inspired by the conflicts of nature in northern climes. The troublous manifestations of frost, fire, and tempests became jokuls, or giants, abhorrent and hostile. Summer, the miracle of grass and flowers, and the genial, life-giving warmth were benign gods.

According to these people the universe was divided into three realms, Asgard (as'gärd), Midgard (mid'-gärd), and Niflheim (nif'l hīm).

Asgard was the home of the gods. It was high above Midgard, the home of men. Entrance to Asgard could only be effected by crossing Bifrost (bif rēst),



A Valkyr riding to battle.

the trembling rainbow bridge, which lifted its arch high over Midgard.

In the shining city of Asgard there were palaces of gold and silver for the gods, the most beautiful being Valhalla (val hal'ä), the home of the mighty Odin. Valhalla was the reward of heroes of battle. Its walls were fashioned of spears, its roof of shields, and its benches were armor-decked. To this magnificent hall, the souls of slain heroes were carried by the Valkyrs (val'kirz), the air-maidens of Odin, the Choosers of the Slain, whose duty it was to select the souls for Valhalla. In the great hall the fortunate heroes enjoyed alternate fights and feasts, a life that meant perfect bliss to their savage souls.

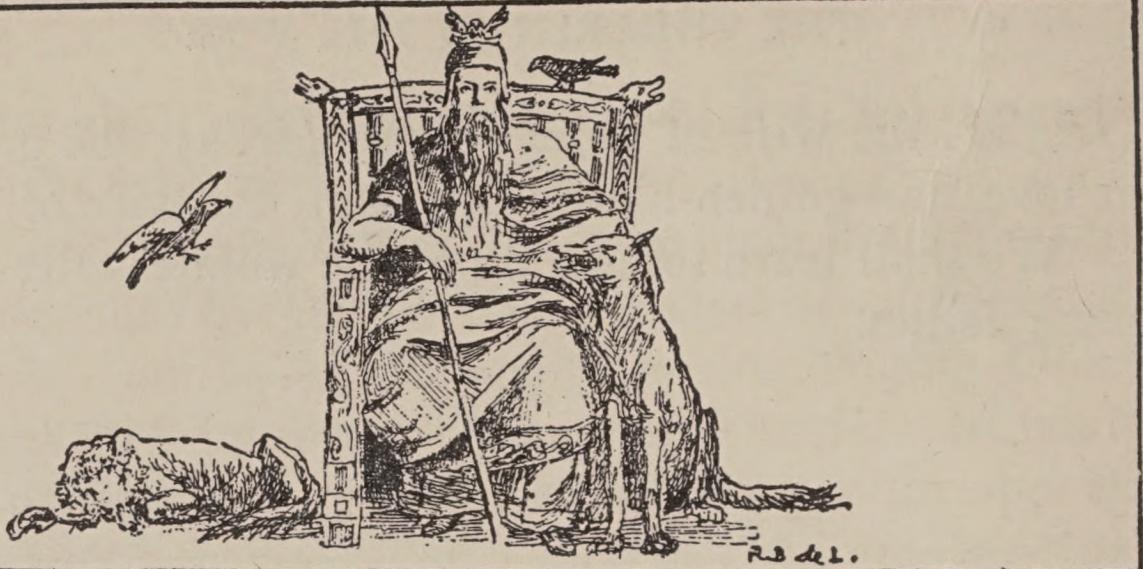
Opposed to Valhalla was Nifheim, the desolate realm of darkness where Hel (hel), the pale goddess of death, held undisputed sway and ruled over nine worlds.

The Frost Giants were the great enemies of the gods, always contesting with them for the mastery of the universe. Dwarfs and giants, cunning, shrewd, and skillful, dwelt in the underworld, fashioning wonderful things at their magic forges. Elves and fairies sported joyously in Alfheim (älf'him), the place twixt heaven and earth.

Among the gods and goddesses were Odin, the All-Father; Thor, the Thunderer; Tyr (tir), the one-armed god of war; Frey, the god of summer winds; Balder (bâl'der), the Beautiful, the god of light; Frigga

(frig'ä), the wife of Odin; Freya (fri'ä), the goddess of love, and golden-haired Sif (sēf), the wife of Thor.

We shall learn something of the wonder tales about these deities.



Odin, the All-Father.

CHAPTER II

WONDER TALES OF ODIN, THE ALL-FATHER

ODIN was the most powerful of all the gods. He was called the All-Father. One could not by any chance mistake him, for he always wore a flowing mantle of blue with countless specks in it. It has been whispered that this robe of Odin's was only the blue sky, and the specks, fleecy clouds.

Nothing could escape the knowledge of Odin. He knew all things, for his two ravens, Thought and Memory, perched upon either of his shoulders, kept their keen eyes upon all things, and ever whispered into his ears the happenings among men.

Not only did Odin know all things, but he was very wise. Wisdom and knowledge are not always the same thing. For his wisdom Odin paid a high price. Having heard of the wonderful Well of Wisdom, he

determined to drink from its waters. This well was in a strange and dangerous place, for it was situated at the foot of the great earth-tree, Ygdrasil (*īg'dra sīl*), which reared its branches to Asgard, the home of the gods, and pierced its roots deep into the dreary land of Hel, the region of the dead. The well had wonderful properties. From him who drank of its waters, nothing was hidden; to his gaze the Past opened her pages, and for him the Future broke her seals.

Odin could not rest till he had drunk from the well. Clad in his mantle of blue, he sallied forth and journeyed from his palace in Asgard, till he reached the well, which was guarded night and day by an old giant called Mimir (*mē'mir*). Of him Odin craved the wished-for draught.

Mimir had the deepest and wisest eyes of all creatures, and when he heard Odin's request, he turned those wondrous orbs upon him, and said thoughtfully, "He who drinks of the waters pays the price."

Then said Odin, "Tell me the price, I pray you."

"He who would quaff from the well," replied Mimir, "pays with an eye."

Even Odin paused at this demand. An eye! Almost, he thought, he would rather part with his life. And yet, wisdom! Yes, he would pay the price. Wisdom was worth it. As he reached his decision, he lifted his hand and plucked one of his precious eyes from its socket, saying, as he handed it to the amazed Mimir, "Here, I pay the price; give me of the drink."



"Here, I pay the price; give me of the drink."

Taking the eye from Odin's hand, the giant gazed on it long, and then, muttering a strange rune, he cast it far down into the well, bidding the god drink his fill.

Thus it was that Odin exchanged an eye for wisdom, which is never obtained without a costly price of some sort. The eye that the god retained grew strangely bright, so bright and all-seeing that some have said it was the sun itself.

Odin returned to Asgard to Valhalla, but ever after he carried in his bosom sorrow, for his knowledge of coming things weighed on his soul. When the gods, reckoning not of the future, boasted of their eternal youth, and the imperishable splendors of Asgard, Odin gazed upon them sadly, but he said nothing, although he knew that the last great day was surely creeping on, when Asgard and the gods would all pass away and become but as a dream that is dreamed.

Having obtained wisdom at a fearful cost, Odin set about obtaining another wonderful gift—the gift of song and poetry. He obtained this by drinking of a certain precious mead.

The queer little dwarfs who dwelt in the underworld had, in envious malice, slain the world's most wonderful man—its first poet. From the blood of their victim the evil creatures brewed a magic liquor, the Mead of Inspiration, a single draught of which could transform a common man into a poet one able to work musical magic with mere words.

Unfortunately for the dwarfs, a giant named Suttung (sut'tung) got them into his power and would accept as their ransom only the precious mead. Reluctantly, but to regain their freedom, the dwarfs parted with their prize.

As soon as Suttung had it in his possession, he took it home, and, for safe keeping, secreted it in his cellar, placing his beautiful daughter Gunlod (gun'löd) with it as a guardian. This really made Gunlod a prisoner. It was a dreary life for a lovely girl, shut in a cellar, guarding a mead she was forbidden to taste. While Gunlod was guarding the wine, Odin's two ravens, Thought and Memory, discovered the whole affair and reported it to him.

Thereupon said Odin, "Since I drank from Mimir's well, I have been the wisest of all beings, and now never will I rest till I bring into Asgard the divine mead of poetry."

The gods in Asgard were used to Odin's absences, and they made no comment when he donned his blue mantle and started on his journey to Jotunheim (yō'tōn hīm), where dwelt Suttung, the giant.

Now, though Odin was a god, and very powerful, the giants were powerful also, and it was impossible for him to get into the cave where the wine was hidden, without assistance. He planned to get that assistance.

When he arrived at Jotunheim, he took the road to Suttung's house. On his way he passed through a field that belonged to Baugi (ba gē), one of Suttung's

brothers. In the field there were nine thralls, or servants, cutting the grass for hay.

Odin stopped and looked at them. "Ah," said he, "I see by your close-cropped hair, and the collars you are wearing, that you are thralls. To whom do you belong?"

The thralls made answer, "To Baugi, brother of the great giant, Suttung."

"How slowly you work," said Odin. "Why do you not cut faster?"

"Cut faster!" echoed one of the thralls. "Who could cut faster with scythes as dull as ours are?"

"Poor fellows," exclaimed Odin. "I am sorry for you. Let me sharpen your scythes with my whetstone."

In an instant the thralls crowded around him. When he had sharpened their scythes, and they had tested them, and had seen how cleanly and how swiftly they cut the grass, they set up a cry, entreating him to sell them the stone.

"I will give it to you," said Odin, "but you must fight for it." So saying, he flung it high into the air.

Alas for the foolish thralls! They all jumped for it at once, and in the furious fight that ensued every thrall of them was slain.

This was just what Odin wanted to happen. Turning from the field, he hurried on his way till he came to the house of Baugi. Of course, everybody,—even a giant,—was hospitable in those days; so, when Odin asked for entertainment, he was made welcome.

As they were eating their supper, Baugi said to his guest, "I am in great trouble. My nine thralls have been killed and I know not how to fill their places."

Said Odin "I am looking for work, why not hire me?"

"How can you do the work of nine thralls?" asked Baugi, scornfully.

"Try me and see," was Odin's answer.

"And what shall I pay you?" asked the giant.

Odin spoke slowly, "I will take but one thing for my wages, and that is a drink from the mead your brother Suttung has hidden in his cellar."

The mead! Baugi started. He was surprised to find that a stranger knew of it.

"I do not know that I could get you the mead," he replied. "Suttung certainly never would give it to me for you."

"Promise," said Odin, "to lead me to his cellar, and to help me to get it, and I will do your work."

Baugi was so anxious about his fields that he consented. In his heart he meant to escape fulfilling his promise if he could.

Odin went to the fields and when in due time the task was completed, he claimed his reward. So there was nothing left for Baugi to do but to lead him to the cellar of Suttung.

Now this cellar was really a secret cave in a hollow mountain, and it was walled securely all around. How to gain an entrance was the question. Baugi was sure

it could not be done. Odin knew better. Handing an auger to Baugi, he bade him bore a hole in the mountainside. Baugi at first thought of refusing, but there was suddenly something so strangely grand and commanding about his servant that he feared to disobey him. So he began boring with the auger, wondering how that was going to lead to an entrance.

When he had bored but part way he stopped, thinking to deceive his companion. "Here," he said, handing back the auger, "I have finished."

But Odin had a test ready. He stepped up to the hole and blew into it. The dust immediately blew from it into his face. Of course, this proved that Baugi had only partially bored the hole. Odin was very stern. "Finish your work," he said, handing the auger to the deceiver.

This time the giant acted fairly, and when he completed his task, he turned to give the auger to his companion. Imagine his dismay to find him gone!

Gone—yes! But ah! creeping up the wall, and making straight for the hole, was a small white worm. Baugi wondered what it was. Then he guessed; and, when the worm reached the hole, he spitefully pushed the auger in after it, hoping to kill it.

But he was foiled, for a voice, the voice of his workman, called out triumphantly, "Too late, Baugi, too late! I am in safe."

Gunlod, in the cave, was sitting disconsolately beside the vessel of divine mead. The great walls of

the hollow mountain closed around her, and far, far above her she could see a small patch of blue sky. She was just thinking how tired she was of her task, and how she wished there was some one to talk to, when lo! there stood before her a fine young man!

A young man! How did he get in there? Where was the worm?

Gunlod was surprised and delighted to have a visitor. Such a pleasant one, too, for the young man said all sorts of sugar-sweet things to her. She ought not have listened, but she did. When he had flattered her in every possible way, and had praised her beautiful hair, and her starry eyes, and her sweet voice, and her gentle manners, he mentioned the wine. Surely so sweet a maid would give a thirsty friend just a sip of it.

She was all alarm at once. "The mead? Oh, no! no! I dare not! Suttung would surely slay me."

"Just three sips," he pleaded. "Suttung will never know." He pleaded so convincingly that finally she yielded. "Now mind," she cautioned, "just three sips and no more."

"Yes," assented Odin, lifting the vessel to his lips, "just three sips." Three sips were all he took. But such sips! When he finished the last one, there was not a drop of the mead left.

Gunlod looked into the vessel. Empty! Full of alarm, she turned to reproach her guest, but all she saw was a great eagle flying far up the hollow mountain to its very summit.



When Odin finished the last sip, there was not a drop of the mead left.

An eagle! How did it get there? No young man in the cave! What had become of him? Suttung, the giant, who entered the cave at that very moment, guessed what had happened. He knew the culprit was Odin, and, hastily changing himself into an eagle also, he started in pursuit of the god.

All the deities of Asgard gathered upon the rim of the celestial regions to watch the chase, and leaning over the shining ramparts, gazed with anxious eyes. Suttung seemed to gain upon Odin. The watching gods held their breath. "Faster, faster, Father Odin," they cried to him.

Odin heard and he knew that his pursuer must be near. "Gather the firebrands!" he called to the watching gods. "Kindle a flame on the edge of Asgard!"

They obeyed him at once and heaped up a vast pile of brands and set them ablaze. Scarce was the pile aflame when Odin fluttered safely through it, almost exhausted, followed closely by Suttung, who, being but a frost giant, was at once consumed in the flames.

Thus it was that Odin, the All-Father, brought the precious mead of poetry, of divine inspiration, to Asgard. Since then sometimes a single drop of the marvelous mixture is vouchsafed to some favored mortal, who thereupon becomes a poet, living in a land of fancy, sailing upon wings of wonder to the very edge of the world, feeling the flash and the glory of the higher, nobler sphere of the soul.



Thor, the Thunderer.

CHAPTER III

WONDER TALES OF THOR, THE THUNDERER

NEXT to Odin, Thor was the most powerful of the gods. His spacious palace had five hundred and more halls in it. One always knew when Thor was coming, for he heralded his arrival by fierce lightnings and a dread thunder-peal. When he was angry he drew his bent brows together like two black clouds.

Thor had a fair young wife, the lovely Sif, whose greatest beauty was her magnificent hair, which enveloped her from crown to toe like a glittering veil of purest gold. It was the most beautiful and most luxuriant hair in the world. Sif was very proud of her tresses, but not more so than was Thor, her husband. But trouble came to the radiant locks.

In Asgard dwelt Loki (lō'kē), an evil mischief-

maker. His chief joy was to spoil the joy of others. He had never succeeded in bringing trouble to Sif and Thor, though he had tried hard enough to do so. But one day his chance came. It happened on a bright, clear day, when, in spite of the dazzling sunshine, there was a strange chill in the air, that Loki paid a visit to Sif's palace. Sif was sound asleep when he came, and her long, lovely hair all loosened, was floating about



“She shall have a hair-cut, and no charge for it.”

her. As Loki gazed upon her in her sleep, an idea struck him and he chuckled maliciously. “Here's my chance,” he muttered. “I will trick Sif nicely. She shall have a hair-cut, and no charge for it.”

So saying, he slipped out his long knife, and then very quietly snip, snip, snip! While she slept serenely on, all unconscious of her loss, he cut off the precious locks so close to her head that when he was through she was perfectly bald! You can imagine what she looked like.

Loki was delighted with his evil work. When he saw how changed she was without her lovely hair, he laughed wickedly. "Oh, ho! Sif," he murmured, "I have spoiled your beauty, and I wonder what Thor will say!" Satisfied, he stole away lest anyone should discover he was the culprit.

Sif awoke soon after. She wondered why her head was cold. Lifting her hand to it she discovered her loss! Such an outcry as she made! "My hair! my hair! my hair! Someone has stolen it!"

Sobbing and storming availed her nothing. The hair was gone. She looked in a mirror, and when she saw her changed appearance, she was shocked and, vowing no one should ever see her again, she hid herself.

Thor came home after a time. Sif was not to be seen. He called and called. There was no answer. Then in alarm he began to search for her. Finally he found her in a distant room, hiding her head.

"Dearest Sif," he said, "what has happened?"

"My lovely hair! my lovely hair!" she sobbed. "Some one stole it while I slept, and now I am bald and unbeautiful! Oh, my hair! my hair!"

If Loki could have seen Thor then he would have trembled indeed! Such thunderings and lightnings of rage! His wrath was a veritable tempest.

"It is Loki!" he cried. "Only Loki, the evil one, would do this! Oh, let me but catch him, and he shall pay for his deed with his life. Stay here, Sif, till I find him and kill him." So he kissed her hurriedly, and off he started in quest of Loki.

That wicked creature was hiding in some bushes near a stream, and when he heard Thor thundering along, he guessed his mission, and, in great fright lest he be caught, changed himself into a salmon, and jumped into the stream.

His transformation did not save him, for Thor soon discovered him, and catching him, compelled the culprit to resume his natural form. Then he clutched the wretch by the throat, and vowed he would choke him.

"Spare me," gurgled the alarmed Loki, "spare me, and I will go to my friends, the dwarfs, in the underworld, and I will get them to give me for Sif a more beautiful head of hair than the one I stole from her."

At this Thor relaxed his hold on Loki's throat. "Come to Sif," he said. "She shall decide this question."

When Sif heard of Loki's proposal, she begged Thor to spare him. "Anything," she said, "to get my hair again."

So Loki, released, set out to seek the dwarfs. He found them in their caves in the mountains. They

were queer looking little men with great green eyes, large heads, and tiny legs. They dared not face the light of day, for it was said the sunlight would turn them to stone.

Loki was acquainted with certain of these dwarfs known as Ivald's Sons. To them he made known his



The dwarfs give Loki the gifts for the gods.

wishes, and the dwarfs, proud of an opportunity of displaying their wondrous skill, promised, not only the hair for Sif, but also a spear for Odin, and a ship for Frey (frī), the smiling god of summer.

When the treasures were completed, and Loki saw

the hair, he knew his boast had not been an idle one, for the new locks were richer and more beautiful far than the stolen tresses. "Let them but touch her head," said the dwarf who made them, "and at once each hair shall become alive, so naught shall ever again have power to despoil her of the tresses."

As for the spear intended for Odin, it was a magic one that could never miss its aim. But the ship! That was the greatest marvel, for it could ride over land and sea alike, and was capable of expanding itself till it could carry all the gods at once. It could be made so small as to be folded and carried in a pocket.

Loki was delighted with the gifts and he passed out of the jewel-studded cave, declaring that Ivald's sons were the cleverest dwarfs in all dwarfland.

Now in the land of little people there was a very famous dwarf named Sindre (sin'dre). A brother of this dwarf, Brok (brök) by name, heard Loki's boastings, and he was indignant that any one should dare say another was more skillful than his brother.

"Ivald's sons are cunning," he said to Loki, "but nothing they are able to fashion can equal the treasures that come from the forge of Sindre, my brother."

Loki laughed scornfully. "I will bet my head," he said, "that Sindre cannot equal the gifts given to me by Ivald's sons."

"I will take your wager," replied Brok. "We will soon show you." And therewith he sought his brother's forge and laid the matter before him.

"How many gifts has he for the gods?" asked Sindre.

"Three," replied Brok.

"Very well," said Sindre, "we will make three also."

He began to work. Getting some gold, he put it into the furnace; and, bidding Brok blow the bellows and on no account to stop for one instant, he went out of the cave to repeat, in secret, some magic runes to aid in the work.

Now, a vicious gadfly, that had not been there an instant before, flew to Brok as he blew the bellows and stung him hard upon the hand. The pain was great, but Brok kept on blowing, and the gadfly, which was Loki, was foiled and full of rage, for when Sindre returned he drew from the furnace a wonderful ring for Odin.

Next, he put a swine-skin into the furnace, and, having cautioned Brok to blow the bellows constantly, he retired again to repeat the magic runes.

Brok worked faithfully at his task, but soon that troublesome gadfly came again, and, settling on his neck, stung him a second time.

The pain was even greater than it was the first time, but Brok only said, scornfully, "Wicked one; you are Loki, I know, but never shall I spoil my work for you."

When Sindre came back, he looked in the furnace, and drew out a boar covered with bristles of purest gold. Then he got ready for the third test. This time

he put some iron into the furnace, and giving Brok the same warning, he went out as before to chant the magic runes.

Brok blew away, nor paused a second, though the gadfly fluttered here and there about him, trying to distract his attention. At last, seeing that the dwarf would not stop, the cruel creature lighted upon his eye, and stung him so severely that the blood began to flow.

Maddened by the pain, and almost blinded by the blood, Brok paused for a moment to rub his eye.

Just then his brother returned and rushed to the furnace. "Another moment and it would have been spoiled," he cried, drawing from the furnace a wonderful hammer. "See," he said, "the handle is a little too short, but that cannot be helped now. However, it will be powerful enough as it is to protect the gods from the Frost Giants. Go now and take your gifts to Asgard."

When Loki and Brok arrived at Asgard all the gods were gathered for the judgment. Thor sat with his arm around Sif, who had a mist wrapped about her head to hide her baldness.

"Where is Sif's hair?" he thundered to Loki.

"Here," answered Loki, triumphantly, handing him the crown. Thor placed it upon Sif's head, and wonder of wonders! it immediately grew fast to her scalp, and all the gods and goddesses, crowded around her, admiring it, and declaring it was brighter than the stolen tresses. Sif was happy once more.

Loki, well pleased with himself, presented the spear to Odin, and the ship to Frey. Both gifts were received with great favor; and then it was Brok's turn.

Lifting the ring, he said, "Here is the ring, Draupnir. Every ninth night it will drop eight rings like itself. It is the emblem of perpetual fertility. Never, while Odin wears it, will earth fail of her garment of flowers or her carpet of verdure."

Odin thanked Brok for the ring, saying, "Of a truth, it is a wonder; yet hardly can I choose between the ring and the spear. But show us what you have for Frey."

Then Brok brought out Golden Bristle, and said, "Bright as the middle noon these bristles can make the darkest night, and over land and sea alike, swift as the flight of a bird, is the flight of Golden Bristle. This is the gift of Sindre, the dwarf, to Frey, the gentle god of summer winds."

Frey thanked him for the glittering charger and said, "Wonderful, indeed, is the boar, but so is the ship Skidbladner (*skid bläd'ner*), and scarcely can I choose between them."

"Show us what you have for Thor," said Odin.

Then Brok brought forth the hammer. "Naught," he said, "that is shapen may withstand this hammer. The mountains themselves may be cleft by it, and by it the Frost Giants and their glittering palaces may be shattered into fragments. Moreover, it will always return to the hand that hurls it. This," he added, "is the gift of Sindre, the dwarf, to Thor, the mighty one."

Thor took the hammer to test it, and swung it over his head. The lightnings scarred the skies and the thunder roared and rumbled.

“Brok! Brok!” cried the gods in chorus. “Brok has won! With such a weapon as the hammer, Asgard may hurl defiance at the Frost Giants.”

Thus it was that Brok won the wager.

“Come now,” he said to Loki, “forfeit me your head as you pledged.”

Loki, however, had no intention of parting with his head. He refused to pay the forfeit, adding, “Unless you can take my head without touching my neck.” So, as this feat was an impossible one, Brok was compelled to relinquish his claim. He managed to punish the trickster anyway by obtaining permission from the gods to sew the lips of the deceiver together. With an awl he bored a hole through the lips, and, running a thong through the hole, fastened them securely.

The hammer did such good service against the Frost Giants that it was considered the most precious treasure of Asgard. So careful was Thor of it that he always slept with it within reach.

One night Thor had a bad dream. He stirred uneasily in his sleep, for he thought the hammer was gone and Asgard was at the mercy of the giants. When he awakened in the morning he remembered his dream and reached his hand for the hammer to make sure it was safe.

Picture his consternation (kōn'stēr nā'shūn), when he found it gone! "My dream has come true!" he cried. "Some one has stolen the hammer!"

He roused the other gods and when they heard the awful news, they all went about with white faces and trembling lips, whispering to each other, "Asgard is in danger! The Frost Giants have stolen the hammer!"

Even Loki was concerned. Bad as he was, he did not want the enemy to destroy Asgard, and he offered to play detective and go to Jotunheim in search of the lost treasure.

For once the good wishes of the gods followed him in his quest. Taking the form of a bird, he flew straight to the strange, desolate land of Frost and made his way to a hill near the glittering palace of Thrym (trim), the chief of the Frost Giants.

Thrym, shaggy, grim, and terrible, was sitting on the hill, and he laughed boisterously and mockingly when he saw Loki, for he guessed his errand. Loki made short parley and asked at once for the hammer.

"Find it and you may have it," said Thrym. "Eight fathoms deep it lies buried in the earth, and no one but myself can locate it. I will yield the hammer on condition that the beautiful Freya will come to Jotunheim and be my bride."

Even Loki laughed at the idea of Freya, who loved sunshine and flowers, and birds, and bees, and soft winds, leaving all to be bride to a chill Frost Giant.

He explained to the giant the impossibility of granting his demand, and tried to bring him to other terms.

The giant was obdurate. "Freya," he roared. "Freya alone will I accept in exchange for the hammer."

Full of dismay, Loki returned to Asgard and reported the result of his mission.

"Freya must go," said Thor, when he had finished. "The hammer must be restored. We must coax her to go."

So Freya was called before the assembled gods, and Thor, craftily, began the siege. "Dear Freya," he said, "Loki brings us good news from Jotunheim."

"Indeed," she replied, "and what may it be?"

"Why," returned Thor, "the noble giant, Thrym, has sent proposals to you to become his wife. If you consent he will restore the hammer."

Freya grew ominously haughty. "Then you will not get the hammer back," she snapped, "for I will never marry a hideous (*hid'ē ūs*) Frost Giant—not for forty hammers. It makes me shiver just to think of him. His awful eye splits the rocks when he looks upon them."

It made all assembled Asgard shiver, too, to think of him, but still they put forth new arguments.

"Dear Freya, do go," they entreated, "and we will give you the finest of gifts. Come, get ready for the festival."

Freya stamped her foot. "Festival indeed! I

would call it a sacrifice. But it shall not be. I will never marry Thrym—never. Marry him yourselves if you want to!"

That ended the matter as far as she was concerned. For a time no one could think of a plan, but at last a bright idea struck Heimdall (hīm'däl), the guardian of the trembling rainbow bridge, Bifrost. His idea was a good one. "Let Thor, disguised as a bride, go to Thrym's palace. Deck him in bridal finery, and jewels; fasten on him the jingling keys of a housewife, and cover his head with a misty veil so that none may see his face. Let him then fare forth to Thrym, but also let him insist that the hammer be given to him before the wedding. Once it is in his hand, the rest will be easy."

The gods were all delighted with the plan, and Thor, in bridal array, with Loki as serving-maid, got into his goat-drawn chariot, and away both were driven to Jotunheim, the distant, dark, chaotic land of the Frost Giants.

Word had been sent to Thrym of Freya's coming, and he was waiting in the doorway of his sparkling palace when Thor and Loki drove up.

"Welcome, thrice welcome, fair bride," he cried. "Come at once to the banquet prepared for you."

Thor answered not a word, and permitted himself and his companion to be led to the table. Thrym placed before the supposed bride small and delicate dainties. He was quite surprised to see these thrust

aside to make way for more substantial things. Such an appetite as that bride had! Two oxen, eight salmon, cakes, sweetmeats, and three barrels of mead disappeared in a twinkling.

"What makes you so ravenous (*răv'n ūs*), fair bride?" Thrym cried.

Loki, fearing Thor might betray himself, answered quickly, "No wonder Freya eats. She has been so happy and excited over her marriage to you that she has eaten nothing for eight days."

This pleased Thrym. "I must kiss the fair bride for her affection," he said. But when he leaned toward her, he started back, for through the veil Thor's eyes gleamed like fire.

"How fierce Freya's eyes have become," he said to Loki.

"Oh," said Loki, readily, "that is only the fire of love you see in her eyes."

Thor could scarcely control himself when he heard this. Nothing but the thought of the precious hammer kept him from pouncing upon Thrym and telling the giant how he hated him. Thrym, all unconscious of the deceit, and well pleased that his bride so loved him, was now easily persuaded by Loki to bring in the hammer. "As soon as it is in the bride's hand," he said, "you shall kiss her lips."

Thrym, eager for this reward, placed the hammer in the hand of Thor. No sooner did Thor's fingers close over the precious handle than the god sprang up

with a terrible cry, rent the veil from his head, and hurling the hammer first at Thrym, then at the guests, and, lastly at the palace itself, soon had the whole realm a mass of ruins.

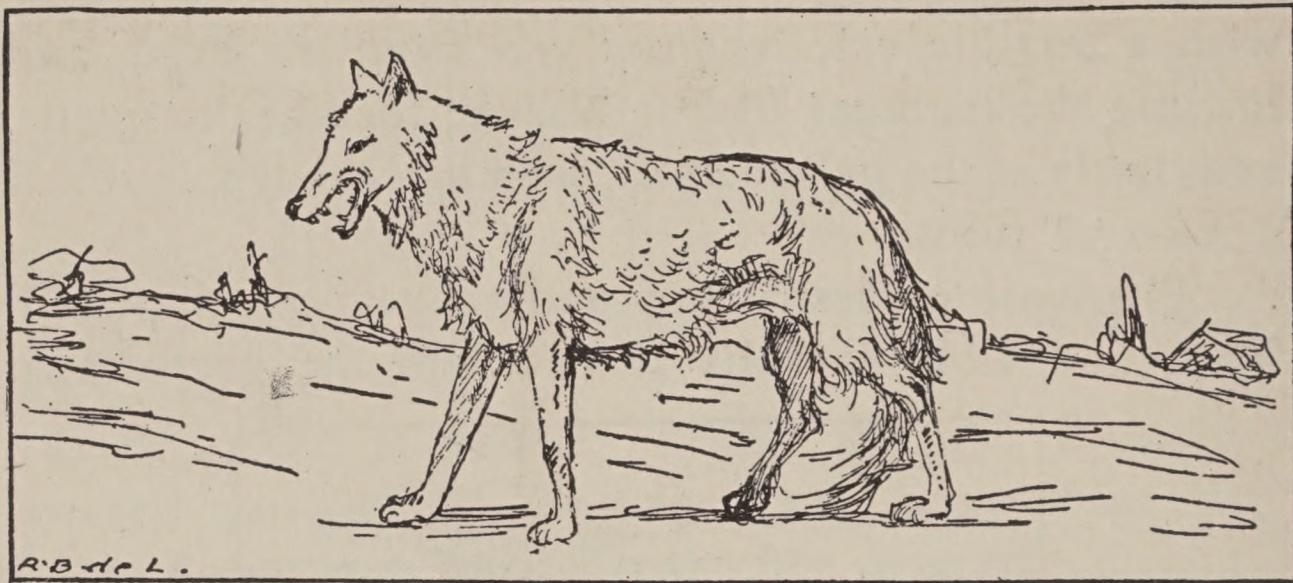
The work of destruction and vengeance completed, Thor and Loki joyfully leaped into the goat-drawn



"As soon as the hammer is in the bride's hand," said Loki, "you shall kiss her lips."

chariot, and quickly rode to Asgard, bringing with them in triumph the precious hammer.

The hammer recovered, the gods thought Asgard was perfectly safe, but a new danger threatened it. The next story will tell of this danger.



The Fenris Wolf.

CHAPTER IV

WONDER TALES OF THE FENRIS WOLF

THAT inveterate mischief-maker Loki was the cause of more trouble in Asgard. He had wedded a giantess in Jotunheim, and their three children were such unspeakable monsters that Loki was ashamed of them. He tried to hide their existence from the gods, but Odin's all-seeing eye discovered them, and Loki was compelled to bring them into Asgard to be tried before the tribunal of the gods.

When the gods saw the creatures they were horrified, and no wonder! One was Hel, the terrible goddess of death, the second was an indescribable serpent called Iormungandr (*yēr'mūn gandr*), and the third was a wolf named Fenris (*fēn'ris*). Something must be done to protect Asgard from such a brood. So it

was decided to cast Hel into the depths of Nifheim, the chill land of mists, under the far north of the world.

Circling the land of Hel was a dark river, arched over by a bridge of glass, held by a single hair. At the entrance of this bridge stood the guardian, a fleshless maiden, clad in somber shroud and pall. None but the dead might dare attempt the crossing of that bridge. Once over the bridge, the spirit passed on to Hel-gate, guarded by the fierce dog Garm (gärm), who must be disarmed by the offering of a Hel-cake. Whilst the dog devoured the cake, the spirit passed unmolested into the nine dismal worlds of the dead, where, mid ice and snow and rolling glaciers, ruled Hel, the pale goddess of death.

The gods decided that the serpent Iormungandr must be cast into the sea, and this was accordingly done. Once there the creature grew with such rapidity that he enclosed the world, tail in mouth, circle-wise. The evil serpent often made awful disturbances, lashing the seas till the waves rolled mountain high.

Dangerous as were Hel and the great sea-serpent, they were less to be feared than the wolf Fenris. It was deemed best to keep him in Asgard itself, where he could be watched constantly. Fenris was easily managed in his youth, but as years passed and he grew in size and ferocity, the gods themselves shuddered to meet his hungry eyes, and none dared strive to master him save Tyr, the sword-god, son of Odin, and one of the twelve chief gods of Asgard.

Odin himself always wore a shadow upon his face when he looked upon Fenris, for it had been whispered in his ear that in the awful battle of the Last Great Day he himself would be swallowed up by the mighty Fenris.

Fenris roamed unrestricted in Asgard, snapping and snarling as he pleased, till at length the gods decided it was too dangerous to harbor him longer. Accordingly the herald trumpet was sounded, and all the gods summoned to a special council to decide the fate of Fenris.

"Let us kill him," said some, annoyed to think how their daily life had become one of fear because of him.

"Nay," said Odin, "let us have no bloodshed in Asgard."

"Bind him," suggested Thor. "I, myself, will forge a chain so strong that he cannot break it."

This suggestion met with general favor. Thor hurried away to the smithy to forge the chain. All night long he wrought. Asgard rang with his sounding anvil! How anxiously the gods awaited the completion of the work!

Evil Fenris knew that Thor was fashioning a chain to bind him, but he only laughed, for he knew his own strength. But when the chain was made and shown to the gods, they all wondered at its strength and they called it Leding.

"Surely," said Odin, "this will serve to bind Fenris." Fenris, hearing them, laughed wickedly, and read-

ily consented to be bound. Round and round and round him they wound Leding, and the better to secure him, Thor riveted the chain to a great rock. For a moment all Asgard breathed freely. But only for a moment. Almost before they realized it, Fenris quietly shook himself, and, stretching his great limbs, snapped the mighty chains as easily as if they were but twigs. The gods trembled and fear again took possession of them.

Thor, undaunted, went to work at once on another and a stronger chain. Three days and three nights he wrought it, and finished the strongest chain ever made by gods or men. He called it Dromi. When the gods saw it, they rejoiced, for they thought it could not fail to bind Fenris.

Fenris only laughed, and again readily consented to be bound. No sooner was the chain wound about him, and fast riveted to the rock, than he strained his mighty limbs and snapped Dromi into tiny pieces.

Again the gods trembled, and Thor, ashamed of his failure, said, "I can do no more. Dromi was my best."

Then spoke Frey, the gentle one, "Naught but a chain of magic can bind Fenris, and none but the dwarfs can make such a chain. Send, therefore, a swift messenger to them to bid them haste and forge a chain to bind Fenris, ere he destroy Asgard."

Thereupon Skirner (skēr'nēr), the swift messenger, was sent to the underworld to consult the creatures.

How the little people crowded around him when he arrived there—strange, cunning-eyed, misshapen creatures, with black faces and hair unkempt! Eagerly they listened to Skirner's story, and, flattered that Odin, the All-Father, deigned to ask their assistance, they promised to make the fetter.

They went to work with a will and soon the chain was forged. Now this chain was seemingly but a slender thread, for it was woven of impalpable (im păl'-pă b'l) things—the noise of a cat's footfall, the breath of fishes, the roots of stones, and the longings of bears; but, being a magic chain, the more it was strained, the stronger it became.

Skirner, with his trophy, returned to Asgard. When Odin saw the chain he knew it would serve.

But there was trouble with Fenris. When he saw the delicate cord he grew suspicious and refused to be bound. "Leding and Dromi I broke, for I knew of what they were made," he said. "But this is a chain of magic and I will not wear it."

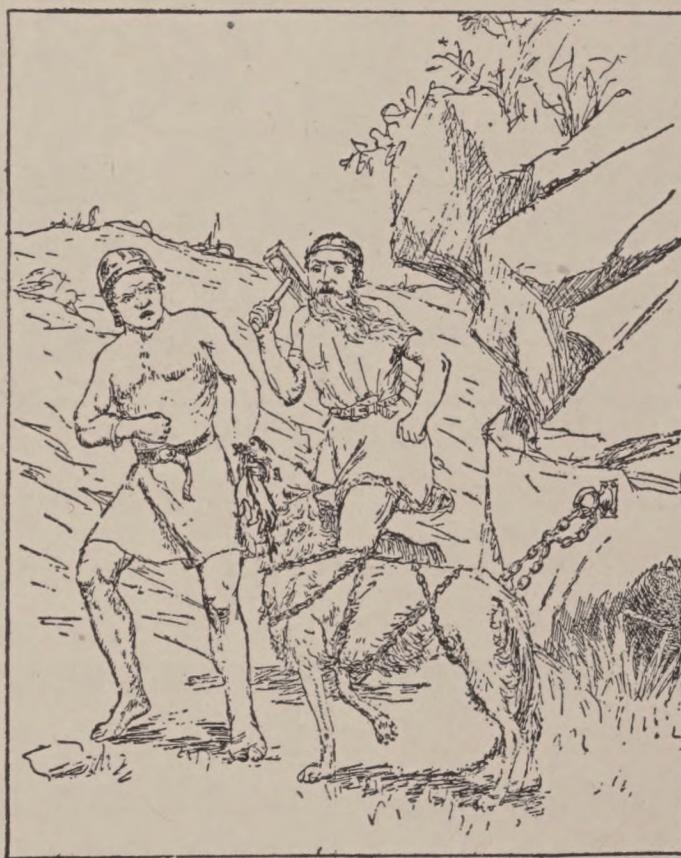
The gods scorned him. "So! the fearless Fenris fears a cord!"

The pride of Fenris was touched. He could not let the gods deride him. "I will fear the cord no more than you need fear me," he said. "Let us make a bargain. I will let you bind me with it, if one of you will put his hand in my mouth as a pledge that the cord is not a magic one."

There was a long silence when the gods heard these

words. They knew what the sacrifice would be. Finally, the courageous Tyr stepped forth, and, thrusting his hand between the wolf's horrid jaws, said, quietly, "Bind Fenris!"

So the wolf was bound for the third time, and when the work was done, he stretched and strained at his bonds, but behold, through the magic in them, they



Fenris snapped off the hand of Tyr
right at the wrist.

but strengthened with his strivings. Finding himself thus hopelessly fettered, he claimed his forfeit and snapped off the hand of Tyr right at the wrist. This joint has since that time been called the wolf's joint. Thus Fenris was bound in bonds that were to last till

the Final Day when the gods and the grim Frost Giants would meet in deadly conflict.

For a time after the binding of Fenris things went well in Asgard, but there was a day when a new sorrow came. This trouble was connected with Balder, the Beautiful, the son of Odin and Frigga.



The death of Balder, the beautiful.

CHAPTER V

WONDER TALES OF BALDER, THE BEAUTIFUL

BALDER was the smiling, happy god of light, and was loved by all even as light itself is loved. Things generally went well with Balder, but there came a time when he began to have troubled dreams. Night after night a shadow seemed to hang over him, and when day dawned he was still haunted by a dim foreboding that a terrible sorrow was about to come to Asgard.

His bright face grew haggard and pale, and to Frigga, his mother, he whispered his fear that he was going to die. Frigga, or Frigg, as she was also called, was almost beside herself with grief, but she thought of a plan to avert the threatened disaster. "Everything loves Balder," she said; "nothing would knowingly harm him. I will fare through the world and exact a pledge from everything in it not to harm him."

So out she went upon her quest; to the mineral world and all in it; to the plant world with its flowers, and fruits, and grains, and grasses; to the animal world of birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fishes. To each she put the same question, "You love Balder?"

The answer was always the same, "Surely we love Balder, the Beautiful! Who would not love him? Without him there would be neither warmth nor light. Yea! we love Balder!"

Then she continued, "Balder is in danger. Will you swear never to harm him?"

The answer was always the same, "We swear! We will never harm Balder."

When Frigg had gone all over creation and had pledged everything that she thought had power to harm, she was happy again. Balder was safe.

Odin, however, could not rest. He still feared. "I will go," said he, "down to the land of Hel and see if it is possible they are expecting Balder there."

"There is no need to go," said Frigg, lightly. "Everything promised. Balder is safe."

But Odin would not be stayed. He saddled his eight-footed steed, the fleet Sleipnir (*slīp'nir*), and rode straight to Helheim (*hel'hīm*). In that drear realm he found them busy preparing a golden couch and a funeral feast for an expected guest. His heart sank within him, but he said, "I will find Val (*väl*), the prophetess. She will tell me all."

Then he stole to the grave of dead Val, and saying a magic rune over it, roused the sleeper from her long slumber.

The dead prophetess stirred, and from the mold and damp came a low, lone cry, "Who cometh to break my slumbers?"

"I," answered Odin, changing his name. "I, who am called Vegtam. I come to learn who is Hel's expected guest?"

Then Val's thin, peaked voice cut the air again. "It is Balder, the Beautiful. All Helheim rejoices, for Hoder (*hō'der*), the blind one, shall slay his brother, and send him to the realm of pale Hel."

"Alas!" sighed Odin sadly. "Is there no way to save Balder, the bright and the beloved?"

Hark! like a far echo came the voice of Val, "Yea, if all things will weep a tear for Balder, Hel will yield him up. If one thing be found that will not weep, Balder cannot be saved. Now go, for I am weary and you disturb my dreams: I would fain sleep again."

"Stay," said Odin, "but a moment more. Tell me

why is it I seem to see one that mocks and refuses for Balder a tear?"

Then was Val angry. "Thou hast lied to me," she said. "Thou art not Vegtam, but Odin. None but the All-Father could have seen the coming days. Go—I sleep again, and no one shall rouse me from my dreams till dread Ragnarok (räg'nä rëk), the Twilight of the Gods, is come to Asgard." So saying, she hid herself again in her grave, while Odin sorrowfully mounted Sleipnir, and rode back to Asgard.

Meanwhile, during Odin's absence, the gods were celebrating the safety of Balder with games and festivities. In the midst of their fun one of them cried out, "Oh, let's have a new game. Let us play, 'Try to hurt Balder!' Set Balder up as a target, and throw all sorts of things at him. Nothing can hurt him, you know."

"Yes, yes," cried the others, pleased as children with a new game, "let us play Try to hurt Balder."

So Balder was set as a target and they began to throw. But no matter what missile was used, it always glanced aside just as it reached him. Even the crusher, Thor's mighty hammer, hurried back to its master's hand when he threw it at the Beautiful One.

Loki watched the game and his evil heart filled with jealousy when he saw how everything loved Balder, the Beautiful. Loki had always hated Balder, not because the fair god had ever harmed him, but just because he was so beloved of every one.

He turned from the field. "I must find Frigg,"

he thought, "and learn from her how she got everything to promise not to hurt Balder."

Frigg was sitting in her doorway, spinning, as all good goddesses and housewives of those days loved to do, when a queer, bent, old woman came and stood before her.

Frigg paused in her spinning and invited the old woman to sit down. "They are playing a strange game in Asgard," said the visitor. "They are trying to hurt Balder, but nothing harms him."

Frigg smiled. "No," she said proudly, "nothing will ever hurt Balder. Everything has promised not to harm him."

"How wonderful!" ejaculated the other. "Are you sure everything promised?"

"Everything of any consequence," said Frigg. "I missed a bit of mistletoe, but that is such a weak little thing it could not hurt Balder, so he is safe."

"Yes, yes," assented the old woman, "Balder is surely safe." And with that she moved on.

But there was a wicked light in her eyes. No sooner was she out of Frigg's sight than she straightened herself, flung off her cloak, and took another shape—the shape of Loki! Yes, it was he!

"Balder is safe, is he?" he muttered, maliciously. "Well, we shall see!" So saying, he hurried to the spot where the mistletoe grew, and, cutting off a bit of it, hid it in his bosom. Then he made his way back to Asgard, where the game was still going on. All Asgard

rang with the laughter of the merry gods as their missiles turned aside from their precious target.

Balder had a brother, born blind, who was called Hoder, the god of darkness. He was the only one not participating in the play.

Loki strode up to him. "Why do you not play, too, Hoder?" he asked kindly.

"I cannot see to throw," said Hoder, "and even if I could, I have no weapon."

Then Loki offered the mistletoe. "Take this," he said, "and throw it. I will direct your aim for you."

Hoder, all unsuspecting, took the fatal sprig, and, with the arch-deceiver guiding his aim, threw it straight at his beloved brother.

Instantly the beautiful god fell dead and the decrees of fate were fulfilled. A great horror fell upon the gods, and they cried each to the other with pallid lips, "Balder, the Beautiful! Balder is dead!"

In their grief they would have torn Hoder to pieces, but he explained to them how Loki had deceived him. Then they sought Loki, but the evil one had made good his escape.

A messenger hastened to inform Frigg and Odin, who had just returned to Asgard, of the sad news. Odin, knowing there was nothing to be done, began to prepare the funeral honors for his son.

When all was ready, they carried the body down to Balder's noble ship, Ringhorn, which floated idly upon the sea. On the deck they built a huge funeral

pyre (pīr), and placed his body on it. Then they slew his horse and his dogs that had stood looking on in dumb grief, for they, too, in some strange way, knew that Balder was dead. The bodies of the horse and the dogs were also placed upon the pyre with their master.

The gods then passed in mournful farewell review before the pyre, each placing a gift upon it. When it came the turn of Nanna (nän'nä), Balder's fair wife, her heart broke in her bosom, and she fell dead before the pyre.

Tenderly lifting her, Odin said, "It is well they should not be divided in their death. Place her upon the pyre."

Then Odin himself placed his sacred ring, Draupnir (droup'nir), the pledge of earth's fertility, upon the pyre, as his own last offering to his beloved son. "Fire the pile," he said, "and send the ship to sea."

So heavy was the ship with the weight of their woe that the united strength of the gods could not move it, and they had to send to Jotunheim for a powerful giantess to come to their aid. With one push of her great shoulders she sent the ship, Ringhorn, off to sea, a blazing glory.

The sorrowing gods stood upon the shore watching the flames rise higher and higher, till the pyre was completely consumed. Then the lurid glow died out of the heavens, and the blackened hull of the ship gave

a great lurch and rolled over. The sea parted, the waves closed over the wreck, and there was naught to be seen but the darkening sky above and the calm sea beneath. Balder, the Beautiful, was gone!

Frigg could not be convinced that Balder's return was impossible. "Hel will give him back for a rich reward, I am sure," she said. So she sent another son, Hermod (hēr'mōd), down to the depths of the nine worlds of Hel to see if, perchance, the grim goddess of death would yield him up.

Hermod obediently went but the only answer he gained was the one that Val, the dead prophetess, had given to Odin, "If all things weep for Balder, he may return."

When Hermod delivered the message, Frigg felt a great hope arise in her heart. Everything loved Balder. Surely everything would weep for him. "I will at once fare through the world and beseech tears for Balder," she said.

Through the kingdoms of nature she went again, and everything promised a tear, till she came to a certain cave where an evil crone sat in darkness and silence.

When Frigg asked, "Will you weep for Balder?" the crone only gave a mocking laugh. "Why should I weep for Balder? What good has he ever done me here in my dark and my cold? Nay, never will Thok weep a tear for Balder." And she leaped far into the darkness of her cave and was lost to sight. Frigg

started in sore amazement, for she recognized the voice. It was the voice of Loki!

Sadly she returned to Asgard, knowing her quest had been useless, and that Balder, the Beautiful, would return no more.

After the death of Balder, Loki made himself so disagreeable to the gods that they finally banished him from Asgard. But it did not seem right to let him escape with only that punishment, and besides, they could not feel safe with him at large, not knowing what evil he might plot against them. "We must capture him," they decided, "and confine him securely."

Loki knew they were searching for him; so he changed himself, as he often did, into a salmon, and hid in the stream. But the eye of Odin saw him, and the hand of Thor caught him. Together they compelled him to assume his own shape again.

There was a great cavern nearby. Dragging him to it, they chained him to the rocks. Over his head they set a terrible serpent that continually dropped a burning venom (*věn'üm*) upon his upturned face.

Now, Loki, wicked as he was, had lately married a good and beautiful wife, who loved him in spite of his wickedness. Hoping to shield him from the corroding poison, she stationed herself at his side, and held between him and the serpent a cup in which to catch the venom as it dropped. Whenever the cup filled, and she turned it aside to empty it, a few drops fell upon his face and thereat he writhed so terribly

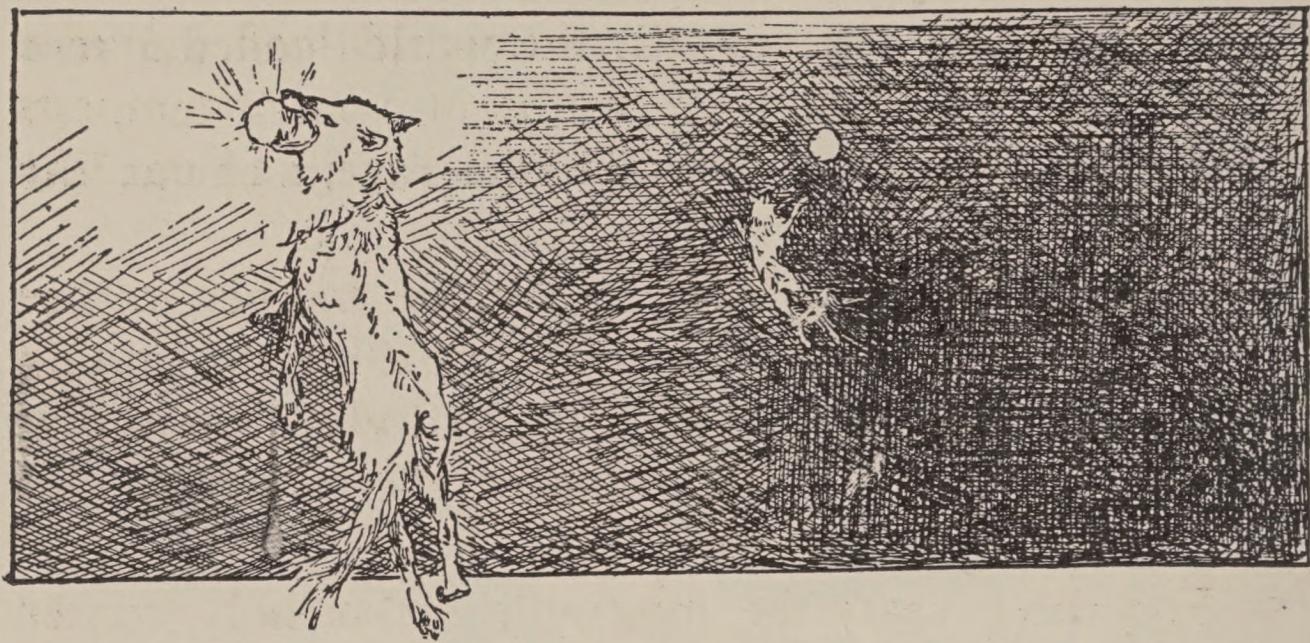


The terrible punishment of Loki.

ROBERT DULFORT

in his agony that the very earth trembled and was rent asunder in places.

So Loki was bound and so he lay in chains till Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, came.



The twilight of the gods.

CHAPTER VI

WONDER TALES OF THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

AFTER the death of Balder, the gods were never glad again. Of them all, Odin was the most troubled. He knew that the last great day when Asgard would be no more was speeding on.

The seasons came and went for a time as they had always done, but gradually there was a change. The winters grew longer and colder, the summers shorter, and the light became pale and misty.

At last came a time when the summers were no more, and a long, endless winter set in. From north, south, east, and west, at once, great feathery flakes of snow fell, piling themselves one upon another into gro-

tesque (grō tesk') heaps, till the world looked like a pallid pall. The rushing winds of wintry tempests sang with a Berserker (ber'sēr ker) rage, and cut like two-edged swords.

Men in Midgard looked upon one another in sore dismay, and the gods shook and trembled in the shining city of Asgard. Only Odin, the All-wise, knew that this was the awful Fimbul-Winter, the fore-runner of the worse Ragnarok.

For three years the miserable melancholy winter reigned, and day by day the sun grew paler and colder. At length came a dreadful day when it was no more, for as it struggled weakly to shine in its accustomed place, there suddenly sprang at it, as from the blackness of a great gulf, a wolf of enormous size that chased after it, and caught it, and swallowed it with one mighty gulp. So was the sun gone.

Then rose the pallid moon, a mere ghost of herself, and behold! with a long, echoing howl, another wolf, leaping from the gulf, devoured her. The stars shot madly from their spheres (sfērz), and desolation reigned. Men wept, and the gods trembled.

In Jotunheim the Frost Giants rejoiced, and Fenris and Loki strove mightily with their bonds, and burst them asunder. Ygdrasil, the earth tree, the great ash, the tree of life and time, whose roots branched into Nifleheim, Midgard, and Asgard, rotted to its roots and fell. And Hel, with her pale hosts, came crowding to the scene.

Odin knew that the fateful hour of conflict had come. "Stand upon the bridge, Bifrost," said he, to Heimdall, "blow a mighty blast upon your horn, and call the gods to the last battle."

Heimdall took his horn, and blew upon it a blast so long and loud that all the gods heard it, and said one to another, "Is this the Day—the last great Day?"

Even as they spoke Heimdall blew another blast, and looking they saw the hosts of Hel, the Frost Giants, Loki, and the fierce Fenris crowding the trembling rainbow bridge, Bifrost, seeking passage to Asgard. So they hurried to the field to front the foe.

Oh, what a battle that was! Odin rushed upon the wolf, but Fenris opened his horrid jaws and devoured him. Thor sprang upon the Midgard Serpent, and split it in two, but the venom that flowed from the wound surged over the slayer and destroyed him. How Tyr fought! But he had only one arm and was soon overthrown. Gods, giants, and monsters fought to the death.

When the battle was at its height one came from the Firelands and flung blazing brands everywhere! Flames, flames, flames, until at last the universe was consumed.

Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, had come.



The Romans invade Teutonic territory.

CHAPTER VII

ROMAN AND TEUTON

IT is only when the primitive Teutons come in contact with the Romans that their annals become history.

The Rhine and the Danube rivers seemed to form a natural boundary for the Roman Empire. At one time these two waterways were a rim between two worlds, one might say, so great was the difference between the dwellers on either side of them: the barbarian Teuton to the north; to the south, the cultured Roman.

One of the earliest experiences of the Romans with the German tribes was during the time of Julius Caesar, about fifty years before Christ.

Rome, then at the zenith (zē'nīth) of her power, had conquered much of the world. Caesar, the greatest of her generals, was in Gaul, completing the subjugation of that territory. The Germans, pressing over into Gaul, gave Caesar trouble; so he informed his men of his determination to suppress these barbarians. They did not take kindly to the thought of fighting the Teutons, for they had heard great tales of the prowess of the barbarians, and it had been whispered, too, that they were not ordinary men, but a race of giants.

The Roman heart that had never known fear trembled at the thought of the Teuton. However, in spite of their fears, Caesar finally induced his men to fall into line, and follow him into the forests to meet the foe.

The barbarians were brave, and in the conflict that ensued fought well, but bulk, bravery, and recklessness could not avail against skill and discipline. The Roman came off victor.

Caesar admired the strength and bravery of the Teutons, and invited some of them to join his army. Tales of the wonders of the mistress of the world had reached the ears of the barbarians, and some of them, eager to penetrate to the enchanted region, entered the Roman service. Little did the great general dream that centuries later the descendants of these same half-wild men would roll like a deluge (del'ūj) over the Roman Empire and sweep it to destruction.

From the time of Caesar on, Rome gradually



A Gaul.

enlisted in her service her future conquerors, and in her service the Teuton learned the lessons that fitted him for the mastery—the lessons of Roman skill, and training, and methods of warfare.

In the early days of the Roman Empire it became apparent to the ruling faction that the tribes beyond the Danube needed watching. When Augustus was the reigning Caesar, he had some hopes of making Germania a Roman province, and he sent a general named Varus (vā'rus) into the forests to take command. But the Roman dominion was not to spread into the Northland.

Among the Germans there rose a hero called Hermann by his own people, and Arminius (är mīn'ī ūs) by the Romans. This man was a patriot, full of the true Teutonic love of liberty. The Roman yoke oppressed him, and he determined to cast it from himself and his people. His first move was to unite the tribes into one strong band. Arminius became the guiding star of Teutonic destiny. Nightly meetings were held in the grim forest depths, and a plan was formed to free the German from the Roman fetters.

According to plan, Varus was notified that a certain tribe, dwelling in the Teutoberg (tū to bērg) Forest near the Weser (vā'zer) river, had revolted from Roman rule. It was the business of Varus to crush such rebellions, and he at once set forth with his legions for the scene.

Being ignorant of the road to the forest, Varus

unsuspectingly accepted the guidance of certain Germans whom he thought to be loyal, but who were really devoted to Arminius. These men led the Romans to the great Teutoberg wild, where for three days the legions, entrapped, toiled on, distracted by darts from ambushed foes, till they reached a clearing in the heart of the forest.

Here to their dismay they found a host of the barbarians drawn up in battle array. It was a fierce fight that followed. The Romans fought for their lives; the Germans for more than their lives—the ultimate liberty of their race. Victory perched on the German banner. The barbarians seemed inspired with the Berserker rage of Odin himself, and performed miracles of valor and strength.

Varus, seeing the utter defeat of his army, flung himself upon his own sword and perished there in the German forest. His survivors met a worse fate, for they were sacrificed on a high altar amid acclamations and wild songs to Thor, the wrathful god of the Red Beard.

This battle was fraught with much meaning for the world. Had the result been different, Roman ideals might have been more in evidence in the world to-day than Teutonic ones.

When word reached Caesar Augustus in his palace at Rome, of the slaughter of his noble legions in the Teutoberg wild, he made a great mourning. He let his hair and beard grow unkempt, beat his head against

the walls and wailed, "Oh, Varus! Varus! give me back my legions!" But Varus heard him not.

For many years the anniversary of the battle of Teutoberg Forest was a day of public mourning in Rome.

Five years later a Roman officer, Germanicus (jēr-mān'ī kūs), visited the scene of the great battle, and finding the bleaching bones of his unburied countrymen, gathered them into a pile, and burned them on a great funeral pyre.

From the time of this great battle, 9 A. D., till the fourth century, there was constant skirmishing (skēr-mish ing) between the Romans and Teutons along the lines of the Rhine and Danube, but no decisive move was made by either side.

In the progress of time great changes took place among the Teutons. The tribes united for better defense into great bands, and became firmly established in their several locations. The Saxons along the lowlands of the northwest, the Franks on the Rhine, the Lombards north of Italy, and the Vandals and Goths on the Danube were among the chief tribes.

Little by little, from many sources, the forest children learned so much of the great city of Rome, almost incredible tales of its splendors, that it became to them as a lodestone whose attraction they could not resist.

Another change had come, too. Rome herself had become Christianized, and the new faith was carried by missionaries to the forest children. Many of them

had accepted it,—not all,—yet enough to make it apparent that the twilight of the gods of Asgard was at hand. The first great missionary among the Teutons was a West Goth named Ulfila (ülf'i lás), who translated the Bible into the Gothic language.

In the fourth and fifth centuries Teutonic bands, organized and invincible, became aggressive. Filled with the spirit of wanderlust and dreaming of conquest, they moved against the Empire in every direction. The Romans called the movements "Invasions of the Barbarians." The Barbarians themselves gave their travels the more dignified name of "Migrations of the People."

By the close of the fifth century the proud Roman Empire, that had once embraced all the civilized world, was a mere ghost of itself. What had happened? Spain was in the hands of the Goths—that was one slice out. Northern Africa was a Vandal possession. Northern Italy fell to the Lombards, and the ruler at Rome was a Teuton. At the same time the Saxons were moving westward to Great Britain, and the Franks, with whom we shall now be most concerned, were going westward into Gaul. Thus the proud Roman Empire was split up, and transformed into separate Teutonic kingdoms.

We followed the rise of the great Greek Empire, with all its splendor, and saw its fall. We saw the same rise and fall in the mighty Roman Empire. Now we are going to see a great Teutonic Empire rise in

Western Europe, hold its power till the death of its chief genius, Charlemagne (shär'lē mān), and then go the way of all world empires. To build up this single empire, one of the Teutonic bands had to become supreme and conquer all the others. The Franks accomplished this feat.

The Frankish Empire is the last of the great world empires. Since the time of Charlemagne, who brought this about, but one other man has attempted to build up a world empire. This man was Napoleon Bonaparte, the ambitious Corsican (kôr'si kän). After the combined armies of Europe rose to defeat him, exile on St. Helena put an end to his great dreams. The dissolution (dis'sō lū'shun) of all great world empires shows conclusively the fleeting nature of all mere worldly power.

The Franks, or Freemen as the name signifies, were the most important of all the Teutonic tribes. Their original home was along the lower courses of the Rhine River. The first king of importance among them was Clovis (klō'vis), who reigned about 480 A. D.

Clovis was proud of his Franks, great blonde giants that they were, with their long mustaches, and long hair braided into two plaits that reached to the waist. These plaits were the greatest pride of the Franks, and it was considered a great disaster to lose them, for they signified that their wearer was a Freeman.

In 486, Clovis and his long-haired Franks marched into Gaul, and met the Romans, who still held that

part of their realm, and utterly defeated them in the battle of Soissons (swä sôñ'). Of course, there was much plunder taken by the Franks in the lands of their conquests, and the churches did not escape in the pillage, for Christianity had not yet made its way to any extent among these people. Though Clovis was a heathen, he had married a beautiful Christian princess, Clotilda (klō til'dä).

From one church many valuable vessels of gold and silver were taken, and among the spoils was a beautiful vase, valued chiefly as a sacred vessel used in divine service. The bishop of the church asked that this one vase be restored—all else would be resigned without question. Booty taken by Teutonic soldiers was generally divided by lot among them, the king receiving no more than the others. This being the law, Clovis could not restore the vase without the consent of the men. "But," said he to the bishop, "I will try to get it for you."

When the division of the spoils was about to be made, Clovis addressed his men. "I have one request to make," he said. "I beg that I may have, over and above my share, that one vase," indicating the coveted treasure.

He did not explain why he wished it. This was an unusual request, but the soldiers readily agreed to grant it, with the exception of one surly fellow, who cried out, rudely, "Nay! you shall not have it. Why should the king have more than his share? The king

is no better than the rest of us. Rather than that he should have it, I will do thus with it," and he shattered the priceless vase into fragments with his battle-axe.

Now, according to the law of the Franks, the man was in the right. The king could claim only a share of the fragments and no more. But according to the laws of courtesy and good fellowship, he was all wrong.

All the men were startled at his rude speech and action, and none more so than the king. He said nothing, however, but in his heart he registered a vow to remember and repay.

It was the custom of the king to examine, occasionally, the arms of the soldiers, to see if they were properly cared for, and it was his privilege to punish neglect by any means he chose—even death.

Not long after the vase affair, Clovis ordered an inspection of arms. When it came the turn of the fellow who had smashed the vase to present his arms, the king closely inspected his battle-axe, and found a nick in it.

He angrily tossed it to the ground. "You are a disgrace to the Frankish army," he cried, "to keep your arms in such a state."

The crest-fallen fellow stooped for the weapon, and as he did so, the king drew his own axe and smote him to death, "Thus didst thou to the vase at Soissons!" he said. In this way the king repaid. According to the law of the Franks, he was in the right, but according to the law of God, he was wrong.



Clovis repays his rude soldier.

Clotilda could not persuade Clovis to desert his heathen gods. However, an event finally occurred which induced him to accept her faith. During a certain battle with some rebellious tribes, Clovis was hard pressed and in danger of defeat. He prayed to his own gods fervently for aid, but alas! Odin and Thor heard him not.

In this extremity he thought of Clotilda's God. "I'll try Him," he said. "If He hears and helps, I will be baptized and become a Christian." Scarcely had he prayed and made the promise when the tide of battle turned and victory was his.

True to his vow, Clovis proclaimed himself a Christian. At the ceremony of his baptism, which took place in the cathedral of Rheims (rēmz), there was a great concourse of people present. Clovis, clad in a long white robe, and attended by three thousand of his followers, who were to be baptized with him, stood before the archbishop, St. Remi (rē'mi), and heard him pronounce the solemn words, "Oh, king! burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burned." Clovis burned the images of heathen gods and adored the Christ whose churches he had burned.

Upon the occasion of his baptism two miracles occurred. The cruse of oil needed for the anointing of the king was brought to the service by a heavenly dove.

Heretofore, the banner of Clovis, under which he fought, and the shield which he carried, had borne a

device of three black toads. During the baptismal service, Clotilda, in a heavenly vision, received a message in which she was told to substitute the *fleur de lys* (flēr'dē lē) for the frogs on the banner. This flower, the emblem of purity, has ever since been the emblem of France.

The conversion of Clovis was an important event, for it meant the ultimate Christianizing of the entire Frankish nation, and hence of all Western Europe.

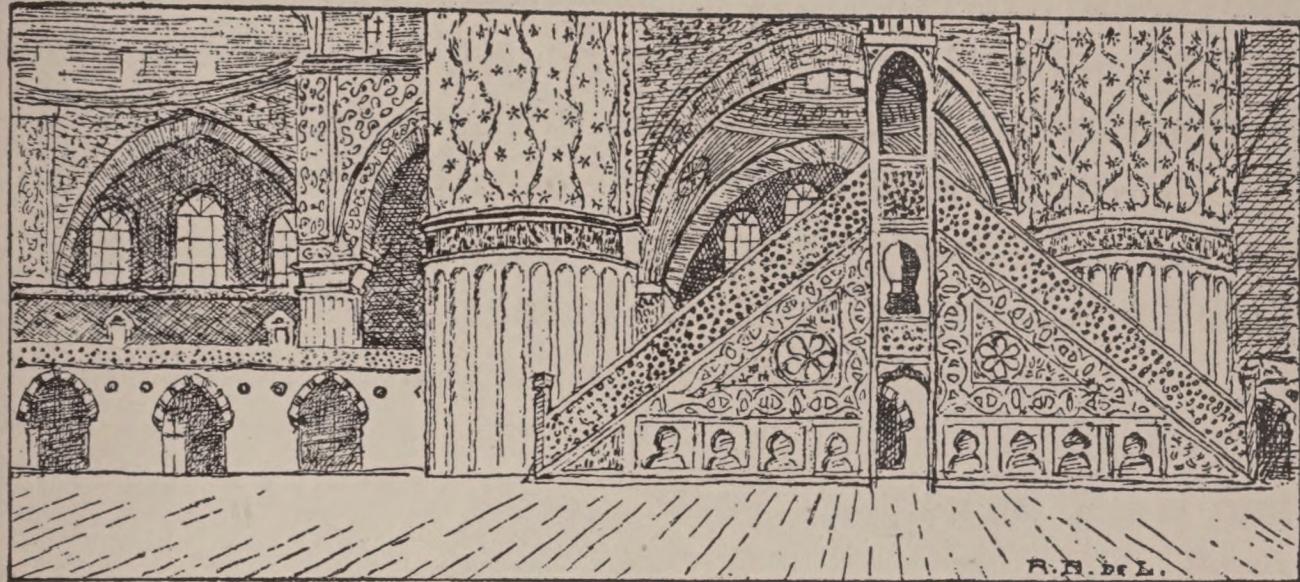
Clovis died and for about two hundred years the power of the succeeding kings declined gradually, until the officer known as the Mayor of the Palace became the real ruler of the nation. The kings allowed the mayors to do a sovereign's work, and hence the kings gradually forfeited their authority.

The Frankish kings, because of the disuse of their own authority, became of so little consequence that they were known as the Do-Nothing Kings. They were really subjects of the Mayors of the Palace, who exercised the rights of the sovereign.

To be sure, the Do-Nothing, with his long hair and beard, still pretended he was ruler, but he was really only a puppet. There was little enough that was royal in his life. His home and income were dictated by the Mayor of the Palace. His royal coach was an ox-cart, and his coachman was the village cow herd. Meanwhile, the mayor lived in royal splendor in the palace.

The most famous of these mayors was Charles,

known as Martel (mär tel'), or the Hammer, who reigned while Europe was threatened with an army of fanatics (fa năt'iks), determined to spread a new religion over the world. These fanatics were Mohammedans (mō ham'ed anz), and they were completely routed by Charles in the great battle of Tours (tōōr) in 732 A. D. Let us learn something of these people and their faith.



The interior of a mosque.

CHAPTER VIII

SARACEN AND TEUTON

IT is generally conceded that the two most important events in the world's history are the birth of Christ, with its consequent Christian dominion, and the migrations of the Teutons, resulting in the overthrow of Roman power. These two, the Christian faith and the Teutonic supremacy, were threatened with annihilation in the eighth century during the Mohammedan invasion of Western Europe.

At that time the Frankish nation was the ruling power of Europe, and Charles, who held the office of Mayor of the Palace, was the foremost figure in the Christian world. The Mohammedans, in their career of conquest, had crossed the Pyrenees (pir'ē nēz)



Charles Martel smiting the heathens at the battle of Tours.

Mountains, and were advancing into Gaul, or France, as it was beginning to be called, in honor of the Franks. Charles, alarmed at the threatening danger, summoned Western Europe to defend the Christian faith.

A great army responded, and in 732 A. D. at Tours, in western France, the battle was fought which preserved Europe in Christianity. During the fight Charles sat on his warhorse, and so pounded the heathens with his great battle-axe that one of his men said, "See, how Charles hammers the heathens!" From that time the warrior was called Charles, the Hammer, or Martel.

The religion, thus checked in its advance, originated in southern Arabia, called Arabia the Happy. The people of that country were Caucasians (kā kā'shāns) of Semitic origin, tracing their descent to Abraham. They were known as Saracens (sar'a senz), a name meaning *Rising Sun*, or *East*. In Spain we call them Moors, which means *dark*.

The original religion of the Saracens was a base idolatry, their chief idol being a black stone, which was probably a meteorite. This stone was kept, with three hundred and sixty inferior idols representing the days of the year (as the year was then reckoned), in the Caaba (kä'bā), the cube-shaped temple of Mecca (mēk'ka). In this temple, there was also a sacred well, called the Well of Zemzem (zem'zem), at which Hagar (hā'gär) and her son Ishmael (ish'mā el), who were driven from Abraham's tent, refreshed themselves.

During the year 570 of the Christian era, in the city of Mecca, which afterward became a holy city because of the event, there was born a child to whom was given the name of Mohammed, the Praised One.

Tradition says that on the night Mohammed was born there appeared in the heavens a crescent moon led by a great pilot star. These heavenly forms became in later years the device of the Mohammedans, and are to-day the emblem of Turkey.

According to Moslem (mōz'lēm) accounts, miracles were not lacking at the nativity of the Praised One. We are told that on his birthnight a strange light illuminated all parts of Syria, and an earthquake threw down the towers of the Persian palaces. These events were symbolic of the future conquering march of the Mohammedan faith. The wonderful child is supposed to have spoken, too, immediately after his birth, saying: "God is great. I am his Prophet!"

It is also told in Moslem chronicles that when he was twelve years of age and was on a certain journey, all the leafless trees along the road burst into luxuriant verdure to shield him from the torrid rays of the sun.

The truth is we have little reliable knowledge of his childhood or youth, and we only begin to get authentic glimpses of him when he was about twenty-five years of age.

At that time he was serving as a camel-driver for a rich and beautiful widow named Kadijah (kä dē'jä). Mohammed was a remarkably handsome man with a

winning personality and courtly manners. He was a good camel-driver, too, and the lady Kadijah, thinking that a good driver would doubtless make a good husband, married him. Despite the fact that she was fifteen years his senior, the marriage was an ideally happy one.

Through his wealthy marriage, which freed him from the necessity of following a regular occupation, Mohammed had much leisure to indulge in meditation on religious subjects. He investigated the religions of his times, and determined to draw up one of his own. His favorite haunt was a cave in the vicinity of his own home. In the privacy of this retreat he planned the faith that is to-day the religion of a vast multitude.

To stamp his teachings with a divine origin, he claimed that they were revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, who appeared to him in a vision of such ineffable light that, blinded by the glory, he became unconscious. Thereupon his celestial visitant assumed a human form, revived him, and revealed to him the will of God.

When he had his creed arranged, Mohammed taught it to his wife and induced her to accept it. She was his first convert, but he soon got others, when he began to preach his gospel openly.

His task was not an easy one, for many ridiculed him, and others, loyal to the idols of the Caaba, called him impolite names, such as sorcerer, magician, fraud, and impostor. In spite of opposition and derision, he

persisted in his teachings, and slowly but surely added to his train of followers.

He did not explain his entire doctrine at once, but gave it out piecemeal, or by "distinct parcels," as he says. Writing material was scarce, and his sacred sayings were written by his disciples upon sheep bones and palm leaves. After his death these sayings were collected into a book which is called the Alcoran (al-kōr'an), or Koran (kō'ran). It is the Bible of the Mohammedans. The name Koran means the *Book*, or the *Reading*. This earthly volume is supposed by Mohammedans to be a copy of a celestial volume which was covered with purple silk and set in jewels. The Prophet is said to have seen this in heaven on the occasion of a visit he made to that realm.

According to his own story, Mohammed was escorted to heaven, on the visit, by the angel Gabriel. It is a long flight from earth to heaven, but the angel had no difficulty in making the journey, as he was furnished with three hundred pairs of wings. The prophet, being minus wings, was carried to the celestial regions on a white horse which was provided for him. This horse was a wonderful creature, with the wings of an eagle, the feet of a dromedary, a body of diamonds which shone as the sun, and the head of a fair maiden. On his forehead gleamed this inscription, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!"

Mohammed taught that there were seven heavens,

which were doubtless the seven planets that circled the sun. He minutely described the glories of the seven heavens, the walls of which he found covered with the same inscription that was on the horse's brow, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet!"

He met many of the ancient worthies in the various heavens. In the first, which was of silver, he found Adam, the father of the race, and doubtless questioned him concerning the Garden of Eden. In the second, which was of gold, he found Noah, who probably told him his experiences as he floated in the ark above the great flood. The third heaven was of precious stones and in this he met Abraham and perhaps discoursed with him of his journey from Chaldea (kal dē'ä) to Canaan (kā'nan). In the fourth heaven, which was made of emeralds, he talked with Joseph about Egyptian affairs, possibly. The fifth heaven was of adamant, a very hard stone. In this Moses reigned as chief spirit. In the glorious sixth celestial sphere, which was of great ruby-hued carbuncles, John the Baptist dwelt, and in the seventh, which was of Divine Light, he found the Savior of the Christians, Jesus Christ.

All of these saints and prophets recognized the visitor as the chosen of God, for they all saluted him, crying, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!"

In one of the heavens he met a remarkable angel, having seventy thousand heads, each head having seventy thousand tongues, and each tongue seventy thou-

sand voices, all chorusing together, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!"

Seven was a favorite number in heaven evidently, for the visitor found that to penetrate to the Throne of God he had to pass through seventy thousand mists of fire, only to find the face of the Creator hidden in seventy thousand veils. However, though he did not see the face of God he felt the Divine Hand. He describes the touch in these words, "A shiver thrilled my heart as I felt upon my shoulder the cold hand of God."

Mohammed was much given to fasting and solitary meditation. People who do these things to excess often have strange fancies, so perhaps the Prophet really had the visions he relates. On the other hand, he may have deliberately invented them for the purpose of impressing his ignorant disciples with the divinity of his mission.

As he persisted in his preachings, his followers became so many that his opponents, who plotted to destroy him, were alarmed. Discovering his danger, he fled from Mecca to Medina (mä dē'nä). This flight is called the Hegira (hē jī'rä). It took place 622 A. D. and Mohammedans reckon time from it as we do from the birth of Christ.

On the way to Medina, finding himself closely pursued, Mohammed hid in a cave. The angel Gabriel, in the form of a spider, appeared there, and wove a web across the mouth of the cave.

Clatter, clatter, the pursuers came riding up. They

saw the cave and one said, "Doubtless the impostor is hidden here. Let us search the cave."

"Fool," said another, "why waste time? Do you not see the web? He cannot be in there; he would have broken the web in entering."

This argument was convincing, so the company moved on without examining the cave. Thus the Prophet was saved and proceeded to Medina, where he soon gathered an immense army that became blindly devoted to him. With these as followers, he began to spread his gospel by force of arms, and he soon discovered how the sword convinces!

It was a wonderful religious empire he dominated, and all over it mosques (mōsk), as the Mohammedan temples were called, sprang up. Mosque comes from an Arabian word which means *to bend*, or *to adore*, and a mosque was a sanctuary in which the worshipers bent and adored.

The most distinguishing feature about a mosque was its tower known as the minaret, from the balcony of which five times a day the muezzin (mū ěz'zīn), the crier of the temple, called aloud, "The hour for prayer!" Then every good Mohammedan, wherever he was, knelt and adored with his face toward Mecca, the Holy City. So do the Mohammedans to-day.

The Caaba of Mecca, which had once been a temple of idolatry, where the Black Stone was worshiped, was made into a mosque and became the chief sanctuary of the Mohammedan world.

The mosques were substantially built and splendidly ornamented. The doors and tables were inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, and ebony in beautiful patterns. There was no imagery permitted, however, for the Koran absolutely forbade the representation of the human figure, as approaching idolatry. Saracenic (sar a sĕn'ik), or Moorish, art as it was called, was limited to architecture and conventional ornamental designs. The most noted of these designs is the fantastic figure called the Arabesque (ăr'a bĕsk'), a name derived from the word Arab.

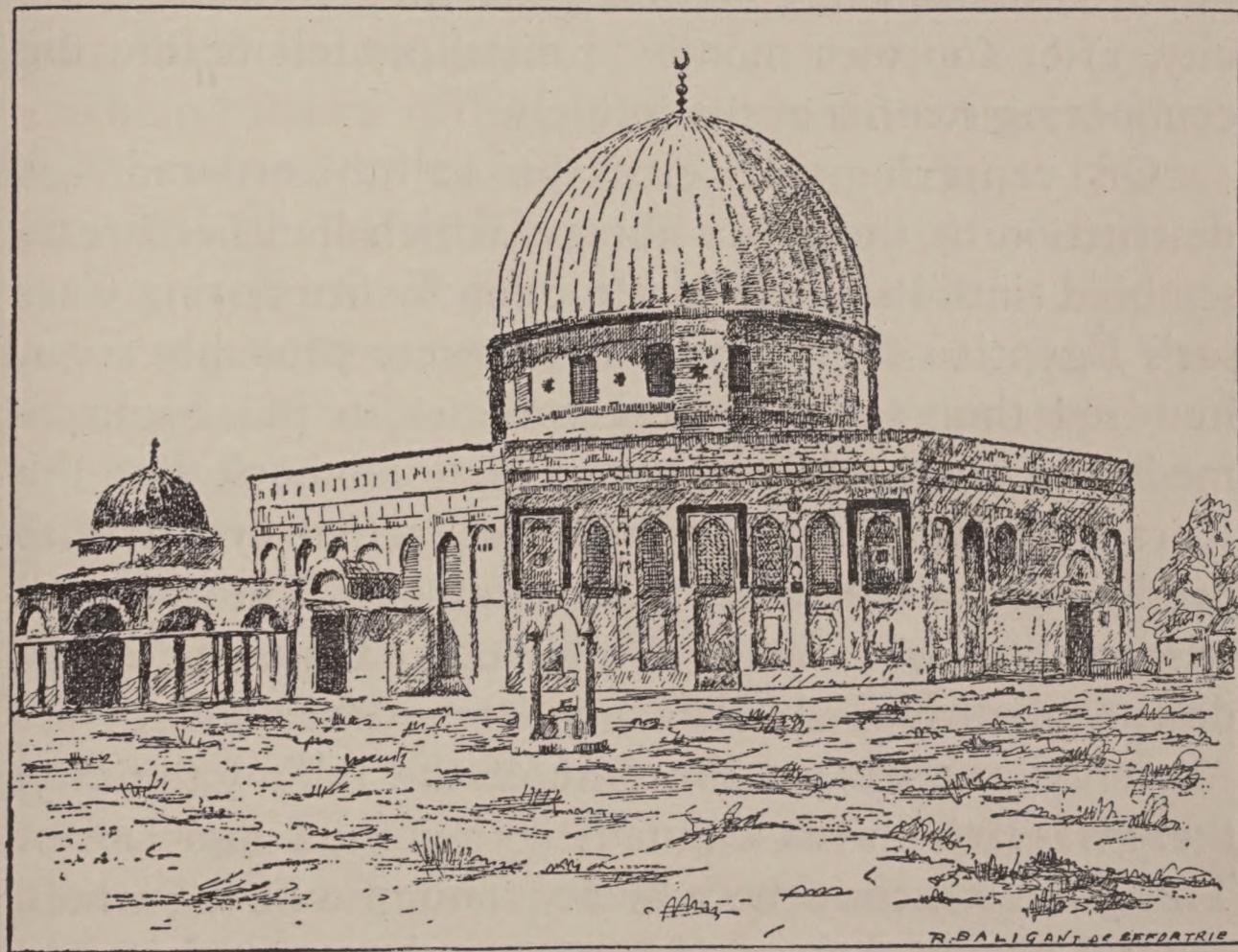
After some years of conquest, the Prophet died, and as there could be but one Prophet, his successors were called caliphs (kă'lifs). The word caliph means *vicar*, or *representative*, and the caliph in his office merely represented the Prophet.

The caliphs, upon taking charge, determined to carry the conquests of their faith still farther, and reached out for other countries. Syria was their first goal. Jerusalem was besieged and compelled to surrender to the caliph, Omar (ō'mär), who journeyed from Medina to the captured city for the purpose of preventing, by his presence, any slaughter of the inhabitants.

The caliph made the journey in a very simple style. He rode on a red camel and carried with him a bag of corn, a bag of dates, and a leathern bottle of water. On arriving at Jerusalem he was met at the gates by the Christian governor, and the two, side by side, rode

into the city, and the transfer from Christian to Mohammedan rule was accomplished without the horrors of massacres that usually occur upon such occasions.

To celebrate the Mohammedan victory, the caliph ordered a mosque to be erected on the site of the temple of Solomon. This temple, the Mosque of Omar, still stands in Jerusalem.



The Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem.

The fall of Jerusalem, sanctified by many sacred traditions, was a terrible blow to the Christian world. It still remains lost to that world, for to-day, after more than a thousand years, the banner of the star and the

crescent floats insolently above it. After Syria came the fall of Persia, and thus were verified the prophetic symbols at the birth of the Prophet.

The conquerors next marched on to Egypt, the land of mystery and marvel, and besieged Alexandria, which was really a Greek city at that time. Corrupt, but splendid with its four thousand magnificent palaces, four hundred baths, and countless other great buildings, the city, after fourteen months' resistance, fell before the conquering swords of the infidels.

On capturing the city the caliph ordered the destruction of the great library, which had been reassembled since its partial destruction by fire during Caesar's Egyptian campaign. There were probably seven hundred thousand priceless volumes in it. Mohammed had taught his followers that no book but the Koran was necessary for their intellectual or spiritual needs. It contained the sum total of all morals and wisdom. His fanatic followers, believing this, destroyed all other literature wherever they went.

In Alexandria, at the time of the fall of the city, there was living a student named John the Labor Lover. This John somehow became acquainted with a Saracen general named Amrou (äm'rōō) and entreated him to spare the books of the library.

Amrou was inclined to favor the appeal, but he dared not without the consent of the caliph.

Said the caliph, "Do the books agree with the Koran?"

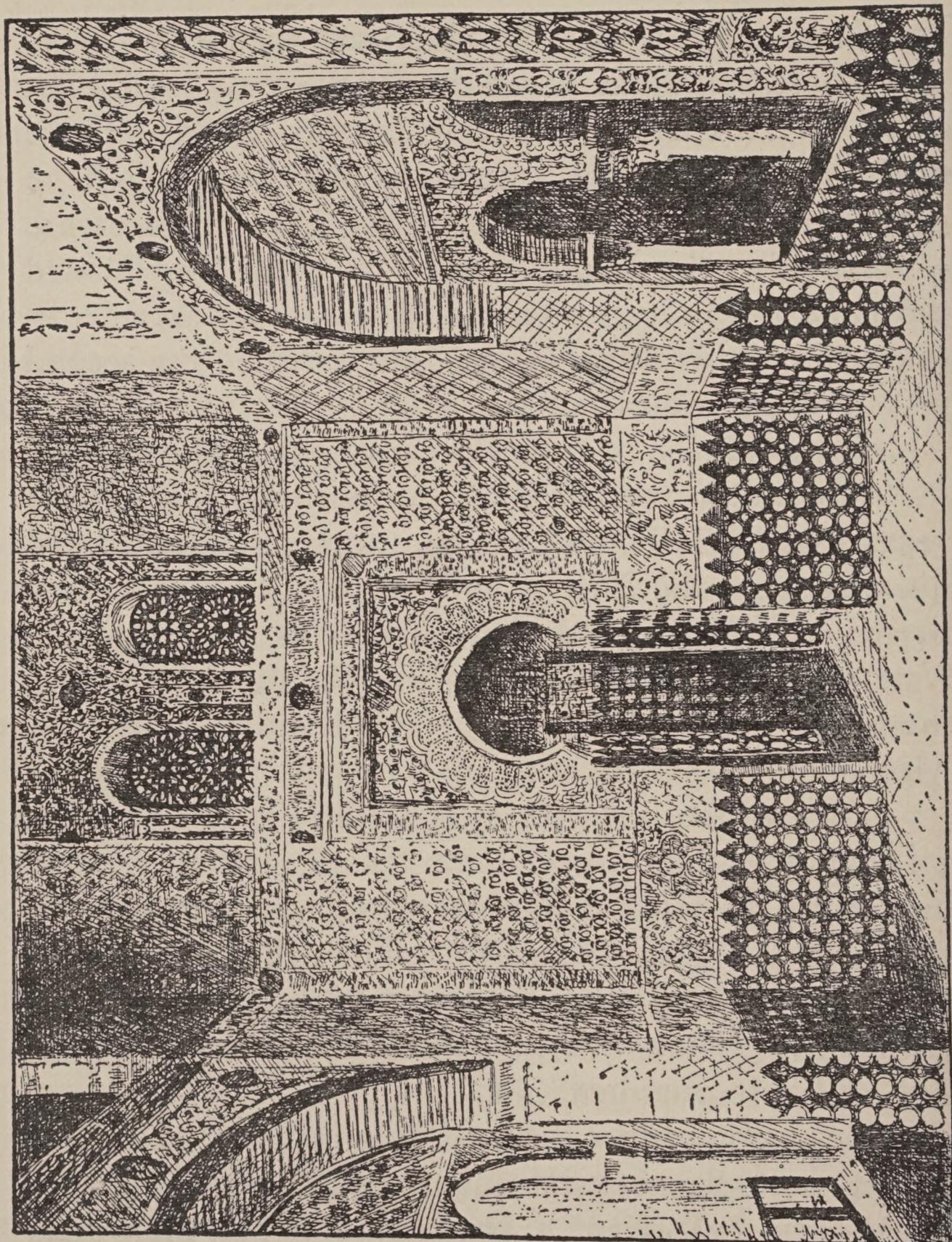
"Some do and some do not," was the reply.

"Those that agree," said the conqueror, "you do not need, for all that is in them is in the Koran. Those that do not agree are worthless, and so all shall be destroyed." Accordingly, the precious tomes were distributed to be burned in the furnaces that heated the baths of the city; and it is said that it took six months to complete their destruction. So perished the second great Alexandrian library.

The possession of Egypt did not content the caliphs, for they aimed at taking all northern Africa. Some years after the fall of Alexandria, another caliph forced his way from the Nile to the Atlantic coast. Barred by the sea in his march, he spurred his horse into the waters, exclaiming, "Nothing but the ocean stops my march to spread the gospel of God and his Prophet, Mohammed."

From northern Africa over the straits of Gibraltar (ji brâl'tär), they pressed into Spain, and there they overthrew the Goths, who had settled in that region in the days of Alaric (ăl'ă rĕk). Then they established the Moorish kingdom of Spain, and built the famous Alhambra (ăl hăm'bră), the Red Palace, full of splendid Moorish ornamentation.

The conquering caliph of this invasion vowed to penetrate to Rome itself and preach his gospel from the Vatican (văt'ĕ kan). They meant to belt the world, these turbaned terrors of the desert, and marching over the Pyrenees, attacked southern Gaul. Far to the



The interior of the Alhambra in Spain, full of splendid Moorish ornamentation.

east, about the same time, another Mohammedan band was casting covetous eyes at Constantinople. Europe was in danger. As one writer picturesquely puts it: "The lurid phantom of the Arabian crescent reared its threatening horns to Europe—one horn at the Bosphorus (*bōs'fō rūs*), the other at the Pyrenees."

Then it was that western Europe was roused, and the Frankish people, under Charles Martel, marched against them, and at Tours, in 732, Christianity and Mohammedanism met in deadly duel. The Christian warriors seemed to realize that this was the gravest crisis that had ever confronted the Christian faith. They realized that they must conquer or yield the cross, perhaps forever, to the heathen sword. Progress and civilization demanded that they should conquer; and they did. After a terrific conflict, the heathens were utterly defeated and their dream of a world empire was shattered forever. The cross had triumphed. Europe was safe.

It is customary to look upon the Mohammedan faith as a delusion, or an imposture, but it has quite a number of very good features. It is the religious faith of one-third of the human race. Mohammed himself could not read or write, but he was strangely gifted. He was sincere in the belief of his own mission. He preached eloquently in his pulpit, and fought valiantly on the field. He elevated a great mass of people from base idolatry to the belief in one God, which was a distinct advance. He made good regulations for the daily life

of his followers, enjoining cleanliness and sobriety. He emphasized the necessity for fasting, frequent prayer, and liberal charity. On almost every page of the Koran these virtues are urged. "Be constant in prayer and give alms!" is his typical admonition.

Those who adopted this man's religion lived it, and to this day no people of any other faith are more loyal to their creed. It tinctures their whole lives. Thomas Carlyle (kär līl'), in his study of Mohammed as the prophet-hero, commenting on this attitude to their faith, says, "This night, the watchman on the streets of Cairo (kī'rō) when he cries, 'Who goes?' will hear from the passenger, along with his answer, 'There is no God but God!'"

The Mohammedan doctrine is a mixture of Jewish and Christian beliefs. Mohammed had been in Syria, and had studied both of these faiths. He adopted from them what suited his purposes, and seasoned his selections with his own ideas and fancies, thus making the creed known as Islamism (īz'lām īzm). Islam means resignation to the will of God. The followers are known as Mussulmans (mūs'sūl manz)—the Resigned.

The Koran, which is read daily in the mosques, and which contains the articles of Islamism, is a confused medley of good and evil, wise and foolish precepts and prayers, threats and promises. The Moslems believe it was divinely inspired and that it explains all the mysteries of creation.

Its science is marvelous. It declares that the

heavens and earth were solid till God rent them asunder. It explains that the heavens form a roof well supported, and that shooting stars are pieces of red-hot stones with which good angels repel the approach of evil spirits. It states that the earth is a great flat plane circled by mountains to hold it steady! Let these mountains give way and the whole earth will drop to destruction!

Modern science and modern metaphysics (*mět'a-fiz'iks*) are striving to bridge the gulf between this world and the next. Mohammed spanned it with the bridge of *Al Sirat* (äl si rät'), the width of a hair. Upon this bridge stands the angel *Israfel* (es rä fēl'), who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. He is the angel of the trumpet, and on his sounding the horn thrice, the souls try to cross the bridge. Those who have lived a blameless life pass over at lightning speed, those of medium virtue travel as a horse gallops, while the unfortunates who have a bad record wabble along uncertainly, and finally drop into the abyss below.

It has been supposed by some persons that Mohammed claimed to be a god, but he did not. He only declared himself a divinely appointed messenger of God. In support of this claim he wore a seal ring with this inscription engraved upon it, "Mohammed, the Messenger of God." In the pulpit he denied any claim to divinity, publicly declaring, "I am no God. I am but the son of an Arab woman who ate fish dried in the sun."

It requires considerable patience for one not of the Mohammedan faith to wade through the Koran. The Prophet himself speaks of it as a "confused heap of dreams!" Yet from its pages we can cull many gems worthy of consideration. Here are a few:

"Use full measures and a just balance."

"Pray five times a day."

"Fear God that ye may be happy."

"Respect your mother."

"Love perfume, prayer, and women."

"They whose balances are heavy with good deeds, shall be happy."

He inveighs strongly against idolatry, drunkenness, and gaming, declaring that "images, and wine, and lots and divining arrows are the work of Satan."

In another injunction he commends the nurture of the finer senses of the being: "If a man finds himself with bread in both hands, he should exchange one loaf for some flowers of the narcissus, since the loaf feeds the body indeed, but the flowers nourish the soul."

The Koran promises many pleasures to the faithful Moslems who work righteousness; it assures them they shall "enjoy gardens of pleasure" and be served plenteous feasts by beautiful maidens with "large dark eyes." The Prophet must have disliked gray-eyed persons, for he promises that "on the last day when the trumpet shall be sounded, God will gather together on that day the wicked having gray eyes!"

Mohammed was a fatalist. Islamism is a doctrine of fatalism; that is, it teaches that everything must come to pass as it has been decreed. The pages of the Koran teem with declarations such as this: "It is written in his book of decrees!" So imbued are the Mohammedans with this doctrine that to this day they resign themselves unquestioningly to the inevitable, merely saying, "It was written!"

These are some features of the religion that revolutionized the lives of nations.

After some years of conquest, having established a wonderful religious empire, partly by the sword and partly by persuasion, the Saracens turned their attention to intellectual pursuits, and developed a great passion for learning. They investigated the literature of the classic nations and many notable works were translated into the Arabic. Among these works were the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," which became great favorites.

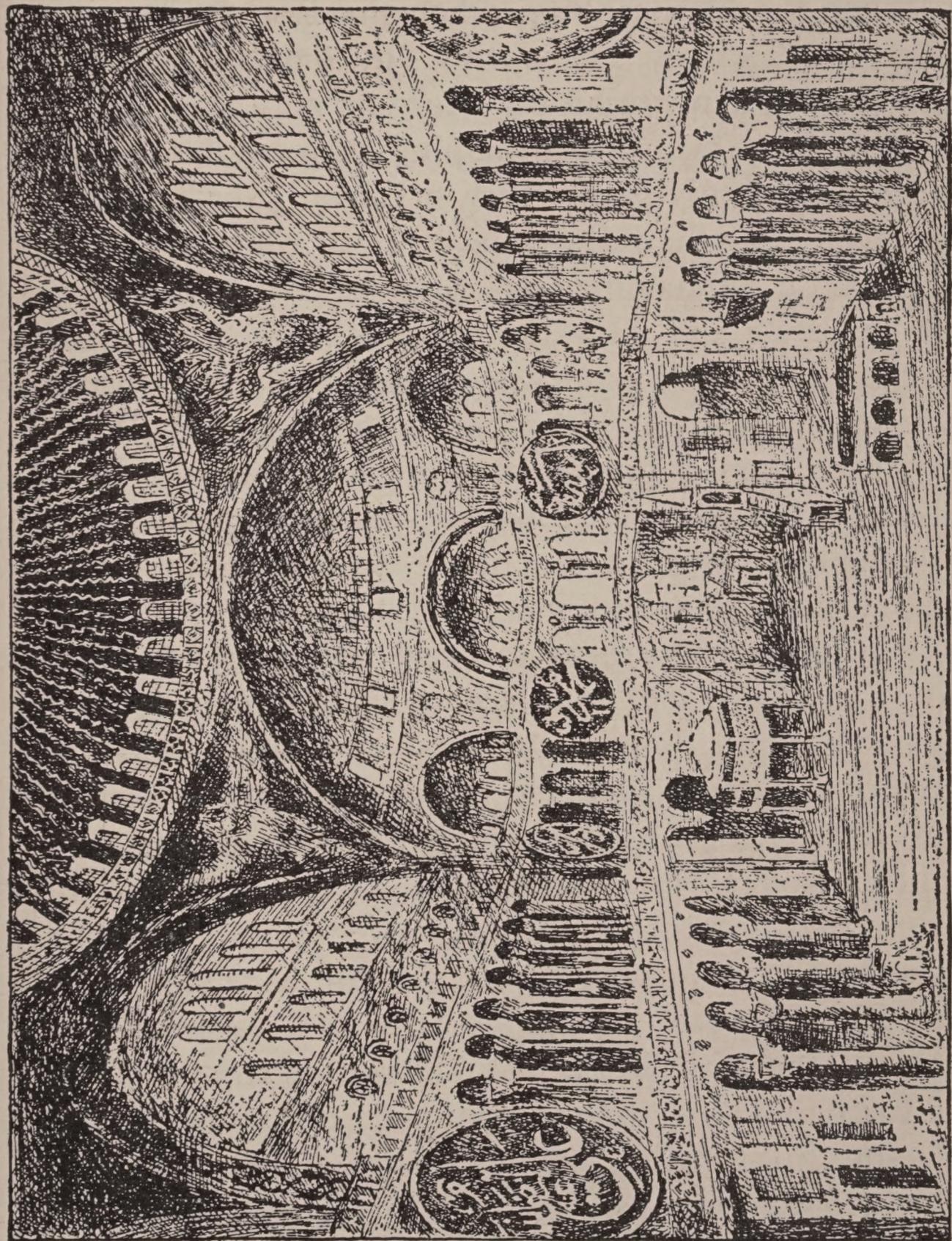
Schools and colleges sprang up every place, and fairly dotted the empire. At Bagdad, Haroun-al-Raschid (hä rön' äl räsh' id), the renowned caliph who was contemporaneous (kön'tém pō rā'nē ūs) with Charlemagne, ordered a school attached to every mosque.

It was the proud boast of the Saracens that they produced more poets than all the other nations combined. They made extensive and valuable experiments in chemistry (kěm'īs trȳ), and brought the study of algebra (al'jē brä) into general use. We are indebted

to them for the idea of the moving pendulum (pen'du-lüm) to measure time, and the introduction of Indian numerals in arithmetic.

But the arts and sciences (sī'ēns ēz) and other serious subjects did not occupy their attention entirely, for they were inveterate chess players and finally taught the game to Europe. Romantic and imaginative writers produced novels and stories. Their most famous story book is the "Thousand and One Nights," which contains the thrilling tales of "Sindbad (sind'bad), the Sailor," and "Aladdin (a läd'īn) and the Wonderful Lamp." It was in this empire that the torch of learning was kept alive while Europe was in the shadow of the Dark Ages.

Exactly one hundred years after the death of Mohammed, the Saracen rule reached from the Indus to the Pyrenees. The religion was destined to have even a wider spread. In the eleventh century the Turks, wild Mongolian (mōn gō'lī än) Tartar tribes from Central Asia, invaded the Saracen empire, captured Bagdad and Jerusalem, and established themselves as rulers there. The Turks adopted the Mohammedan faith and became even more fanatic about it than were the original followers of the Prophet. These were a brutal and ignorant people, and under their rule all the evil influences of the Mohammedan faith again prevailed. For centuries they cast covetous eyes upon Constantinople as a doorway into Europe, and in 1453 they effected the capture of that city.



The interior of the church of St. Sophia.

Since the fifth century, when the Roman Empire, upon the death of Theodosius (thē'ō dō'shi us), had been divided between his two sons into an Eastern and a Western Empire, Constantinople had been the capital of the Eastern division, which had continued an existence even after the fall of the Western Empire in 476.

In 1453, Mohammed II, ruler of the Turks, with two hundred and fifty thousand followers, besieged Constantinople. The city attempted to hold out, but after the Turkish artillery had battered the walls for fifty-three days, a breach was made in them, and the yellow hordes dashed through. Constantine (kōn'stan-tīn), the last of the Caesars of the Eastern Empire, fell in the breach, sword in hand, and perished.

When the capture of the city became an assured fact, the frightened populace crowded to the sacred precincts of St. Sophia, the great church, and in the space of an hour, sanctuary, choir, nave, and galleries were filled with a seething mass of men, women, and children from all ranks and walks in life. Barricading the place as best they could, they prepared to keep the foe at bay. Some even hoped that the Moslem forces would be miraculously repulsed, for an old prophecy declared that the Turks would enter Constantinople and force their way to the column of Constantine before the church, at which point an angel with a flaming sword would appear and drive them from the city back to the uttermost frontier of Persia.

But alas! the angel of the sword failed to appear,

and the Turks, unrepulsed by celestial defenders, battered the barricades and poured into the church led by Mohammed, who, mounted on his horse, flourished his sword and took possession of the place in the name of God and His Prophet!

Just as the hordes broke down the doors, a priest was administering the sacrament. Fearing the invaders would lay profane hands upon the sacred things of the service, the priest prayed for protection, and behold! the wall beside the altar opened, and there came forth a shining angel who carried both priest and sacred things into the niche which instantly closed over, hiding them from view. The amazed heathens, who saw the miracle, strove to batter down the wall, but could not. So legend says, and adds further, that in his safe retreat the priest still slumbers, awaiting the day when the city shall be retaken by the Christians, at which time he will come forth and complete his service.

Failing to force the retreat of the rescued priest, the Turks turned their attention to their frightened captives. Meeting with no resistance from these, they refrained from bloodshed, but worse than the sword awaited the victims, who, regardless of family ties, were yoked into pairs and driven off in long lines to the awful fate of servitude.

So fell the city of Constantinople, and with it the name of Rome. The Eastern Empire was at an end, ended by the Turk, even as the Teuton had ended the Western Empire a thousand years before.

The church of St. Sophia, which was the center of the exciting scenes of the capture, was the most magnificent structure of all Christendom. Begun by Constantine the Great in the fourth century, it was later destroyed by fire, and restored in 538 A. D. by the Emperor Justinian (jūs tīn"i an), who levied tribute from almost every noted temple of the world for its adornment.

The building had vast porticoes and a huge vault over one hundred and eighty feet high by one hundred feet wide. It had eight magnificent porphyry (pôr-fî rÿ) columns taken from the temple of the sun at Baalbec (bäl'bek), eight of green granite brought from the temple of Diana at Ephesus (ĕf'e sŭs), and others from the sacred temples of Heliopolis (hē li op'ō lis), Athens and other cities. The walls and arches were faced with marble slabs and sparkling mosaics (mō zā'iks) of gilded glass. Mosaics are coarse imitations of paintings. They are inlaid work made in patterns of many colored cubes of stones and glass nicely fitted together. When the church was completed, it was so glorious that the emperor, who worked at the building as a common laborer, exclaimed proudly, "Solomon! I have surpassed thee!"

Many beautiful legends cluster about the great edifice. According to these legends, angels were much in evidence during its erection. The intricate plan of the building was revealed to Justinian in a dream by a heavenly spirit. As the workmen slept at night after

their day's toil, angelic hosts took their places and labored at their tasks. When the vast fund for the enormous expenses of the structure was exhausted, and it seemed the church must stand unfinished, an angel disguised as a donkey-boy, led a string of mules to secret treasure vaults and returned with loads of the needed gold.

During the building of the church it was proclaimed that the person who rendered the service most pleasing to God should, upon the completion of the edifice, find his name inscribed by an angel in the sacred place above the altar. Coveting this high honor, many great gifts were contributed by the wealthy nobles, and it was thought to one of these the dignity would be accorded.

But not so! When the church was completed, behold! in the appointed place appeared the name of a poor peasant woman.

The officials sought her out. "What did you do to have this honor bestowed upon you?" they asked.

"I did nothing," she said, "except to remove the sharp stones from the path over which the sorely burdened oxen toiled daily, for my heart bled to see their sufferings."

Thereat the officers pondered in their hearts and thought many things.

When the city was taken by the Turks the magnificent church was converted into a Mohammedan mosque, and such it has remained to this day.



Charlemagne at the head of his army.

CHAPTER IX

THE STORY OF CHARLEMAGNE

AFTER Charles Martel died, his son Pippin, or Pepin (pē'pin), nicknamed The Short, because of his lack of height, took the scepter of Frankish power. He did this in appearance as well as in reality. He decided to assume the title, since the Do-Nothing kings had given over to him all of their authority.

Wishing the sanction of the Pope, who had, by this time, become very powerful in both spiritual and temporal affairs, he asked that official's permission to call himself King of the Franks. The Pope agreed and forthwith the Do-Nothing was shorn of his long locks to mark his degradation, and was sent away to a monastery, there to end his days; while Pippin was anointed king amid great rejoicings.

Though Pippin was short in stature he was decidedly long in courage. There is a pretty legend which shows his valor. He overheard certain of his officers deriding him on account of his stature, and doubting his courage. Angered at this, and determined to prove himself a man of valor, he ordered a wild bull and a lion to be brought to a certain festival at which all the deriding officers were to be present in full armor.

At the sight of the two animals, chained, the spectators shuddered, but they shuddered more audibly when Pippin, who was without armor, coolly ordered the two animals to be let loose. Instantly the lion leaped on the bull and sank his claws into the creature's neck. The spectators were paralyzed with fear. The king turned to his officers. "One of you go and drag the lion from the bull, or else slay him," he ordered.

Drag the lion from the bull! No one stirred. Such a course meant certain death, or so it seemed.

Then cried bold little Pippin, scornfully, "What! afraid! And you in armor! Watch me!" Thereat he drew his sword, rushed at the two animals, and deftly slew them both.

All the ladies present cheered the little hero, and the armored knights felt small enough to hide in a thimble! Needless to say, none ever again questioned the valor of Pippin the Short.

When Pippin died, his son Charles, known as Karl Magnus (kärl mög'nös), or Charlemagne, became king. Charles was the most heroic and picturesque figure in

mediaeval (mē'di ē'val) history, a king, great in peace and great in war. Under him the Franks achieved world empire.

Charles lived in the so-called Dark Ages. The records of those times are so saturated with legends and romance that it is very difficult to glean the truth from them. We learn from them but little of the boyhood of the great Frank; even the year of his birth is in doubt, but it is generally accepted as 742 A. D.

It is probably true that the early education of Charles was that of a warrior, rather than a scholar, for in those troubled times the sword was much more necessary than the pen. However, in his manhood we know without question that Charles devoted much time to study, and became famous for his learning.

As a man he was a notable figure, being seven times as tall as his foot was long, and as he did not wear a Cinderella slipper, he was over-tall. Manly and dignified in his bearing, his open, honest countenance, long, flaxen hair and beard, flashing blue eyes, and proudly poised head attracted attention at once. He was a man of tremendous strength; he could straighten three horse-shoes at a single wrench. The stories tell, too, that he could fell a horse and rider with one blow of his fist.

Charles was a man of very simple tastes and was quite indifferent to style or show. On ordinary occasions he wore the national costume of the Franks; linen trousers and shirt, and a silk-fringed tunic. His stock-

ings were linen bandages or leather leggings; his shoes were laced with leather thongs.

His winter coat was made of otter or ermine fur, and over this he wore a long blue mantle. Always at his side hung his mighty sword, *Joyeuse* (z hwä'yēz).

Though Charles wore plain clothes on plain occasions, no one could outdress him on festive ones. Then he arrayed himself in rich garments of gold-embroidered cloth, rare jewels, and a magnificent diadem, in which he presented a dazzling appearance.

Charles was a professed champion of the Cross. It was his zeal in spreading Christianity that led to some of his greatest conquests and the enlargement of his domain, which eventually included Germany, France, Belgium (bēl'jī um), Switzerland, northern Spain, and Italy—in fact, all of Western Europe.

In the beginning of his reign the Franks were entirely Christianized, but they had heathen neighbors in the forests to their north. These neighbors were a tribe of Saxons, Teutons also, and kindred to the Saxons who had, three hundred years before, invaded and conquered Great Britain. As the Saxons were the tribe farthest north, the Roman influences had never reached them to any extent, and they had advanced but little in civilization. Christian missionaries had occasionally ventured among them, but had met with small success in their efforts to convert the heathens, for whom Thor and Odin still reigned supreme.

These heathen neighbors so troubled Charles that

he could scarcely sleep at nights thinking of their lost condition. He finally determined to Christianize them. This mission he thought to accomplish within a year, but the task was not to be so easy. He found it took thirty years of intermittent (in'tēr mit'tent) fighting before he succeeded.

In the summer of 772, he made his first attempt. He marched into Saxon territory with a large army and a company of priests. Charles was always accompanied by priests. His march was hotly but vainly contested by the Saxons; yet the determined Franks steadily advanced.

In a certain forest the Saxons had a peculiar idol that was sacred to them. It was a gigantic tree-trunk, which they called Irminsul (er'min säl). They thought it was the column which supported the world. It represented the god Odin, who was sometimes called Irmin. This tree-idol, sacred to Odin, was worshiped by the Saxons, who offered it sacrifices and a great store of treasure which was kept in the hollow trunk. This was perfectly safe, for no one would steal from the god. Once a year the worshipers met at the tree to do it homage.

To prove to them the impotence of their idol, Charles ordered it to be cut down in the presence of the heathens. They protested at the sacrilege, but Charles insisted on the test. "If your idol is a God," he said, "he will save himself."

So the Franks chopped, and the idol failed to object.

Out fell the treasure. The eyes of the Franks sparkled, for this was booty and was theirs.

After a number of battles with this tribe, Charles concluded a treaty with them whereby they were pledged to refrain from injuring or harassing missionaries or Christian churches. Believing them quite subdued, he then returned to his capital at Aachen (ä'chen), from which he was shortly called away to war with the Lombards, who had held sway in northern Italy ever since the reign of Alboin (al'boin), the king slain by Rosy Mouth.

The power of the Pope had grown enormously during this same period, and the Church held vast lands. The Lombards claimed some of these and gave the Pope much trouble about them. When war threatened because of the dispute, the Pope sought a champion in Charles, the self-announced defender of the Cross. He felt sure the great king would take his part. He was right.

In response to the Pope's appeal, the Frankish army marched to Italy. The Lombard king, having heard of the great prowess of Charles and of his vast army, was full of terror. He retired to Pavia (pä vē'ä), a city on the Po river, and shut the gates against a siege.

An old writer, whose veracity is questionable, describes the approach of Charles in these words, which are a good example of the exaggeration of the chronicles of that day:

Some years before, one of Karl's distinguished nobles, Otker by name, had offended him, and, to escape his wrath, had betaken himself to the Lombard king. When they heard of the approach of the terrible Karl, the king and Otker climbed to a high tower, whence they could see in all directions. When the advance guard appeared, which was stronger than the combined armies of Xerxes and Darius, the king said to Otker, "Is Karl with this great army do you think?"

And Otker answered, "Not yet."

Then arrived the main army gathered from the whole empire—a tremendous host, and the king trembled. "Surely the victorious Karl is with these troops," he said.

And Otker replied, "Not yet."

"What shall we do," said the troubled king, "if more come with him?"

Otker said, "You will soon see how he will come, but what will become of us I know not."

Behold, while they spoke appeared the servants of Karl's household—a never-resting multitude. "That is Karl," cried the king.

But Otker only said, "Not yet!"

Then appeared the bishops and the abbots and the priests with their companies, and when he beheld these, the king was dazed, and stammered, "Let us go down, and hide in the earth from so terrible an enemy."

But Otker, who knew well the power of Karl, replied, "When you see a harvest of steel waving in the fields, and the Po dashing steel black waves against the city walls, then you may believe Karl is coming."

He had scarcely spoken when there appeared in the north a mist, as it were a cloud that wrapped the day in most dreadful shadow. But as Karl drew near there flashed upon the besieged from the gleaming weapons, a day more terrible than any night. Then they saw him, Karl, the Man of Steel! Steel filled the roads

and fields. The rays of the sun were reflected from the gleaming steel. The people, paralyzed by fear, did homage to the bristling steel. The fear of the steel pierced down into the earth! "Alas! the steel! Alas! the steel!" resounded the confused cries of the people. The mighty walls trembled before the steel. All this Otker saw with one swift look. "There," he said, "there you have Karl, whom you have so long desired to see!" And with these words he fell to the ground like one dead.

So wrote the old scribe. He must have been a poet. But whether it all happened so, or not, one thing is certain—the Lombard king was terrified when the Franks encamped about Pavia and began a siege.

During the progress of the siege, Charles made a trip to Rome to visit the Pope. He was conducted to St. Peter's to see the great church. As he mounted the steps of the noble edifice, he knelt, and kissed each step in memory, he said, of the holy martyrs of the Church. On his entering the building the great choir rose and chanted, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!"

After visiting all the noted places in the Eternal City, he returned to Pavia, and forced that city to surrender. The Lombard king was shorn of his locks and sent into a monastery to end his days.

Charles was formally crowned King of the Lombards, wearing at the coronation the famous iron crown of the Lombards, said to be formed of the nails that fastened Christ to the Cross. But doubtless that is imagination, too.

The Lombard reign in Italy was ended and the

Frankish begun. Charles returned to Aachen, but his season of peace was brief, for he was soon warring with the Saxons, who had shamelessly broken their treaties, and were burning the Christian chapels, and slaying the missionaries.

During these attacks one of the churches founded by St. Boniface escaped by a miracle. The Christian Saxons, pursued by their heathen kindred, took refuge in the church. The heathens were about to fire the church when two radiant angels appeared in shining garments as defenders of the sanctuary. Panic-stricken at the vision, the Saxons fled, all but one man, who, in the act of applying the torch, fell dead.

Finding the heathens obdurate (öb'du rät), Charles vowed he would continue the war till they were either converted or wiped out of existence.

The great leader of the Saxons was a rebel named Wittikind (wít'e kínd), who constantly incited the tribes to break their treaties. He was finally converted and baptized, Charles himself standing sponsor for him in the ceremony. The conversion of Wittikind practically concluded the long Saxon wars, and Saxony became part of the empire of the Franks and ultimately one of the strongholds of Christianity.

By the time he completed the conquest of the Saxons, Charles also obtained possession of northern Spain, and thus was King of the Franks, King of the Lombards, and King of Northern Spain.

He was a great statesman as well as a warrior. He



Charles attends the baptism of the Saxons.

divided his empire into states, called Marks, governed by officers who were Counts or Wardens. These had considerable power, but were all subject to the king. Charlemagne held yearly assemblies of the whole people at which every freeman had a right to appear and have a voice in affairs. These meetings were called Diets. He was a great patron of education. In those days, known as the Dark Ages, learning had practically died out, for the pen was overshadowed by the sword.

In the monasteries, however, there was considerable intellectual life. In these the monks pursued their studies, illuminated their manuscripts, and carved their ivories, but among the people at large there was little education. The only place the torch of learning burned brightly was in the Saracen empire. Charles, in his attempt to relight the torch in Europe, founded schools and invited scholars, wherever he heard of them, to come to his realm. He even made himself a sort of Superintendent of Schools, and visited the temples of learning to see the pupils at their tasks and to observe the methods of the teachers.

The royal visitor found out that he did not understand what was going on. He realized his own ignorance and soon made a change in things. Determined to know at least as much as the teachers, he established a school in the palace for himself and his nobles. He became the prize pupil in his own college, taking all the honors in Greek, Latin, law, and history.

History was his favorite study, and he preferred it taught by stories. So fond was he of this study that the Story-teller of the Palace School had to regale him with heroic tales at meals.

If we may believe a newspaper report, this wonderful man was something of a poet, too, for it is said that quite recently a Cardinal of the Church discovered in the Vatican library an old manuscript containing an elegy written in Latin couplets by Charles in memory of his son.

Industrial schools are a proud boast of modern civilization, but Charles established them in the Dark Ages. He sent his daughters to one to learn spinning and weaving. His own clothes were made from the cloth his daughters wove. He said that if they were not too proud to weave it, he was not too proud to wear it.

Charles got "Poor" in penmanship. He could not write well, no matter how faithfully he practiced. He wanted to be an expert penman and even slept with his tablets under his pillow, to have them in readiness for morning practice, before he arose. But the muscles had been too long trained to the use of the sword, and the hand that wielded the mighty Joyeuse failed with the pen. However, Charles made a fair mark in the world's history in spite of his weakness in penmanship. Several other men have received notable marks on the report cards of the world, in spite of their hieroglyphics which were hard to decipher.

Charles established a literary society among his knights. Each member assumed the name of some learned author or some illustrious character in history. Charles himself was David, as that warrior king was his favorite hero. At the meetings each member was addressed by his assumed name, and many learned subjects were discussed.

Though Charles was a very liberal-minded man, he had an aversion to doctors, for they prescribed for him a diet excluding roast beef, of which he was especially fond. He thought they ought to be able to cure his troubles without denying him his favorite dish.

Life in the palace was very gay. Many of the young nobles, however, attired themselves too gayly on ordinary occasions to suit Charles. He played a trick on them, hoping to point a lesson on the folly of vanity.

One cloudy day he invited them to hunt with him. They dressed themselves in silk and velvet and fine shoes. Charles sensibly wore a sheepskin suit. When the company reached the hunting grounds the king purposely led his companions through briars and bushes. Of course, they had to follow their leader, and when the king heard behind him, "Sizz—rip—tear," he smiled contentedly. The thorns made no impression on his sheepskin suit, and he came through the bushes as whole as he entered them, but his nobles presented a sorry, ragged sight. They wished to retreat to the palace, but Charles was remorseless. "Not yet," he said. He saw a great storm was brewing, and he



Charles presiding at his school.

R. S. del.

wanted to emphasize the lesson by drenching them. Down came the rain in torrents, and the remnants of the fine feathers were completely spoiled. On their way back to the palace, the king led the foolish nobles through deep, miry places in which many left their shoes. His own stout leather boots defied the mire.

On reaching the palace the men were anxious to enter by the back way, and thus escape the eyes of the ladies, assembled at the front entrance. But Charles served them that dose of humiliation, too. "We will eat just as we are," he said. So they had to face the batteries of the eyes of the fair ones, in their bedraggled array. The king himself was the only one who looked like a real man. He was very complacent over the little incident and he was sure he had taught his courtiers such a lesson that they would renounce their vanities, and dress in working clothes on working days, reserving their fine array for holiday occasions. But apparently it was no lesson to them, for the next day every man appeared again in festival raiment. Charles gave up dress reform in disgust.

The fame of the great Frank spread everywhere. From far and near presents poured in on him. Two of these offerings came from the Saracen caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, ruling at Bagdad. The gifts he sent were a water-clock and an elephant. The elephant was the sensation of Europe. No one had ever seen an elephant, and a particular record of his journey and his behavior on the journey has been preserved.

Charles' favorite residence was Aachen, which is also called Aix-la-Chapelle (äks lä shä pel'). The name Aachen is derived from an old German word for water. Aix-la-Chapelle, the French name, means the *chapel by the flowing waters*. There is an interesting legend which explains how Charles chose the site for Aachen.

The gay little love god Cupid aimed his darts at the great king quite often, and led him to the marriage altar several times. One of his wives was a beautiful eastern princess, Frastrada (fräš träd'ä), who won the affections of the king by means of a magic ring. Such was the charm of the ring that whoever possessed it would be the object of the king's devotion. Frastrada fell ill, and fearing that some one else might get the ring, and gain the king's love, she hid it in her mouth and died with it there.

Charles grieved desperately over her death, and, owing to the secret charm of the ring, could not bear to part with the body. He vowed it should not be buried and hidden from his sight, and he spent long hours beside it, fasting, weeping, and praying.

His great friend and adviser, the Archbishop Turpin, in striving to solve the king's infatuation for the dead body, discovered the ring in the mouth of the corpse. He removed it and hid it upon his own person. Charles immediately permitted the burial of the lady, but evinced an embarrassing affection for Turpin. In fact, he persecuted him with loving attentions. The

churchman wearied of this, and, deciding that it must be caused by some magic power in the ring, he determined to get rid of the undesirable magnet. So he stole out into the deep forest and sought a certain broad lake into which he tossed the enchanted ring. Greatly relieved to be rid of it, he returned home and met Charles. Much to his joy, the king, instead of throwing his arms about him and straining him to his bosom, merely nodded and passed on. The charm was over as far as the archbishop was concerned.

Not long after this, Charles, hunting in the forest, chased a royal stag up to the very waters of the pool wherein lay the enchanted ring. As soon as he glanced at the pool, he forgot the stag! "Lovely spot!" he cried. "Spot of my soul's desire! Nevermore will I wander from thy confines save when duty calls me to my holy wars! Here shall be my habitation forever!" So here he founded the famous city of Aachen. You may believe as much of this as you choose.

The life of Charles was miraculously saved upon one occasion. As he was lying in bed one night, wide awake, an angel appeared to him three separate times, and on each occasion repeated the same words. "Arise, go forth and steal."

This seemed a very peculiar command, but as it came from an angel, Charles knew it was given for some good purpose, and he obeyed. He rose, arrayed himself in his armor, mounted his horse, and rode off in quest of adventure.

He had gone but a little way when he met the most renowned robber of the age, a man named Elbegast (ēl be gäst), whom he had been trying to capture for years. Charles engaged the knight in parley. Soon they quarreled, and a duel, in which the king was victor, ensued.

Now Elbegast had never before been conquered by mortal man. He conceived a great respect for the sword that had defeated him. The two fell to talking; Elbegast told his name, but the king withheld his.

Said Charles, "So you are the notorious robber. Well, I, too, came out to-night to steal. Let us join our forces and see what comes of it."

The robber agreed and both set forth. Charles thought to trap the thief, so he proposed that they should rob the house of a certain officer of the king's court.

When they arrived at the house, the thief said to Charles, "You are not an expert thief. You wait here while I go in and get the booty."

Charles waited in the outer court while the thief crept on to the officer's room. He was about to enter when he heard voices. He paused, listening in horror, for he heard the entire details of a plot to murder the king on the following day. He hurried out to his waiting companion, and, not dreaming he was the king, told what he had heard, and urged him to seek Charles and warn him of his danger.

The king promised he would do this and the men

parted. Charles returned to his palace, and being forewarned, was easily able to circumvent the plans of the wicked officer, who was arrested and properly punished.

As for Elbegast, the famous robber, he was apprehended and brought before the king, who, in reward for his loyalty, forgave him and made him one of his most trusted guards. To commemorate his preservation, Charles named the castle where he received the warning Ingleheim (*in'gl hīm*), which means *Angel's Home*.

Charles was a great patron of architecture. In the city of Aachen he erected the most magnificent church of his times. The most skilled artisans of the age worked on it. Its doors and railings were solid brass, and it was gorgeously decorated with ornaments of gold and silver, and rare silken hangings. All the columns were of pure marble. At the church services, the officers had to wear costly and beautiful garments, which were all supplied at the king's expense, for he thought nothing was too good for God.

While the church was in process of construction, Charles was called away on some of his wars, and was obliged to leave the building in charge of an overseer. The man was avaricious (*äv'å rish'us*), and saw a chance to make a lot of money. He called the workmen. "You are discharged," he said. This was terrible. It meant starvation to them. "Oh, let us have our work," they pleaded.

"You may have it on a condition," he answered.
"Each man must pay me one-half of his wages."

Poor men! They had children who needed bread. Half a loaf was better than none; so they had to submit to the tax.

The dishonest overseer stored his ill-gotten gain in two chests. One day his house took fire. He ran home to save his gold, and rushing into the house, got the boxes on his shoulders. As he was leaving a heavy beam fell on him and killed him. The money dropped out of the boxes, and the men told their story. When Charles came back their money was restored to them. The dishonest overseer got his wages, too—the wages of sin, which is death.

Charles wanted an especially fine bell for this church. To cast it he hired a skillful bell-maker.

"I can make you the sweetest-toned bell in the world, if you will give me all silver for it," said the bellsmith.

Charles agreed, though it was customary to use some alloy (*ăl loi'*) in the composition. This man was avaricious, too, and used a common base for the bell, covering it with a thin veneer (*ve nēr'*) of silver. The unused portion of the precious metal he kept for himself, sure that no one would crack the bell to prove its composition.

When the bell was completed Charles was well pleased with it and ordered it to be raised to the belfry, but when it was in place no one could ring it, for it

stuck fast in the tower. Charles sent for the bell-maker, who saw what was the difficulty. "Oh, yes. I will pull it into place," he said, giving a mighty jerk as he spoke. Lo! the rope broke, and down crashed the bell on his head, and killed him. The bell rolling over, hit the hard ground, and cracked open. The fraud was discovered and Charles got back his silver.

This famous chapel was destroyed by the Normans, but was afterwards rebuilt in 983 A. D. by Emperor Otto III. It forms the nucleus of the present cathedral of Aix. In a certain place in the cathedral there is a stone with the inscription, "Carlo Magnus." This slab marks the grave of Charlemagne. Here is preserved the ivory hunting horn of the king, the horn with which he wakened the echoes over hill and dale, the horn whose notes could be heard above the roar of the torrent, and through the wild forest's rustling boughs. But it sounds no more! No one is able to force from it aught but a faint, wailing note. It is as though he, who was its master, said: "Dead is the hunter—silent be the horn!"

Charles had a certain minstrel, called Arnold, of whose songs he was very fond. One time Arnold accompanied the king and some nobles on a hunting expedition. As the company ate their lunch at noon, the minstrel entertained them with his music. So pleased was the king upon this occasion that he offered to give the minstrel whatever he might ask.

The minstrel chose land.

"How much?" asked Charles.

"As much as I can ride around while you and your company eat a meal," replied the minstrel.

The king agreed and the contest was set for the next noon. The minstrel, mounted on his horse, set out from the marked station, and rode at furious speed. His horse soon tired, but he had shrewdly prepared for this, and had placed relays of horses all about the forest. As soon as one horse tired he dismounted and got on another. By this means he succeeded in circling the entire forest and returning to the original station just as the king and his friends completed their repast.

"Well," said the king, "how much land do you claim?"

"The entire forest, your majesty," answered the minstrel.

The king was somewhat startled. This was more, he thought, than he had bargained for, and as the forest was extensive, he failed to understand how it had been encompassed in the stipulated time. Thereupon, the minstrel explained his scheme. "But I do not care for the land for myself," he said. "I only want it so that I may be able to aid the poor with the proceeds I obtain from it."

This argument persuaded the king. He gave him not only the forest land, but a fine castle. To this day, in honor of the minstrel, the place is called Arnoldsweiler (är'nōlds vī ler).

Charles had a young secretary whose name was

Eginhard (in'härd). The secretary was a splendid fellow and attended the palace school where the king and the nobles were taught by the wise priest Alcuin (al'kwin). He learned so easily that his teacher was persuaded that such progress must be due to the special grace of God. Eginhard studied astronomy, music, arithmetic, Latin, and many other subjects. He cared for nothing but his books till he met Emma, the fair daughter of the king.

Now Emma was as fresh as the morn, and as beautiful as the May. All the courtiers were in love with her, and eager to wed her, but she would have none of them.

The moment Eginhard met the fair maid he, too, loved her, but he dared not pay court to her. The daughter of the king was not for the humble secretary, so he adored in secret. Now Emma was thrown often into his company, and, as he was pleasing, and of sufficient intelligence to be able to enlighten her about puzzling things, she often put questions to him to answer for her.

"Explain to me," she said, "the mystery of the rose."

He sighed. "Its mystery is love; its meaning, youth." This was poetic even if it was not scientific.

When she questioned him as to which were the brightest of the stars, he murmured, "Your eyes!" And forthwith he fell to star-gazing.

None of the great nobles talked as the secretary did, and it was not long till the gentle Emma found her

heart in his keeping. The two were tremblingly happy, but they dared not let the king discover their love. Therefore, they contrived to meet in secret.

One winter evening the youthful secretary called on his dear love in her tower where she dwelt. The evening was passed in pleasant discourse. When the hour to part came, and she went to the door with him to say good-night, they were both appalled to find that a heavy snow had fallen, and the earth was covered as with a soft, white mantle. The fall of snow had ceased:

And the moon, placid as a nun on high,
Gazed from the cloudy clusters of the sky!

The lovers were in despair. What was to be done! The mark of Eginhard's Frankish boots would betray their secret. In this extremity Emma's woman's wit came to their rescue.

"I will carry you on my back," she said, "over to your own part of the palace, and then return. My own double tracks will never be questioned."

The German ladies of those days were stalwart creatures, and, as Emma was of especially great strength, she was equal to the task she set for herself. Since there was no other way out of the difficulty, Eginhard consented, and the lady with her burden set forth across the snow.

Now it chanced, just as they were passing through the courtyard, that Charles came to his window to look

out upon the night. He saw how the moon lighted up the gables capped with snow, and how it sheeted the walls and towers. He saw, too, his daughter carrying his secretary across the yard!

Charles had been in love several times himself, and this made him wise. He guessed the secret at once. Nothing was said that night, but in the morning he summoned the lovers to appear before him, and told them what he had seen. The two culprits trembled. Eginhard was sure his last hour had arrived, and poor Emma mentally visioned a cloister. But Charles only smiled at their dismay, and taking his daughter's white hand,

Placed it in Eginhard's and said, "My son,
This is the gift thy constant zeal has won;
Thus I repay the royal debt I owe,
And cover up the footprints in the snow."

You will find this story as told by the American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, among "The Tales of a Wayside Inn."

The crowning glory of Charles' career came to him in his later years when he became Emperor of Rome.

In the year 799 A. D. enemies of the Pope, jealous of his power, fabricated some charge against him and took him captive. They horribly abused him—beat him and even tried to pull his tongue out by the roots. Making his escape, he hastened to his champion, Charles, who was justly horrified when he heard the

story. Charles restored the Pope to his seat. This incident proved that whoever dared injure the Pope had to answer to Charles for it. As none cared to offend the great warrior, who commanded the greatest army of the world, the Pope was safe.

Charles visited Rome in 800 A. D. to make sure that all things were properly settled. He was received with great pomp and splendor in that city. There were great rejoicings among the people, and the Pope was especially happy.

When Christmas was near at hand, the Pope planned a surprise for Charles. A special Christmas mass was to be celebrated in the cathedral, and when the hour of service arrived, there was present a mighty throng of people. Charles and his nobles, in royal state, were the most observed of all present. The choir chanted jubilantly the Christmas story, and Charles knelt reverently at the altar, while the Pope read a solemn mass. After the ceremony, the Pope took a golden crown from the altar, and bending over Charles, placed it upon his head, saying, "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, Emperor of the Romans!"

At the word the vast concourse of people arose, and cried with one voice, "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, Emperor of the Romans!"

Charles appeared to be taken completely by surprise at the coronation, but some histories hint that he knew of it beforehand. In fact, he has been accused of having planned the surprise party himself. However

that may be, Charles was now the most powerful of earthly princes, and thus it came about that a German sat on the throne of the Caesars, and was hailed as Emperor of Rome, on Christmas Day, 800 A. D.

Fourteen years after this coronation, Charles died in his palace at Aachen. His last words were, "Into thy hands, oh Lord, I commit my spirit." He was entombed on the very day he died, his body being placed in the crypt (kript) of the famous church he had built.

He was not placed in a coffin, but was seated on an ivory throne, ornamented with gold. Upon his head was placed his royal crown, on his knees an open Bible, and by his side his well-beloved sword that had served him so faithfully in so many wars.

Almost two hundred years later, the German Emperor, Otto III, ordered the opening of the tomb. The body was found in a remarkable state of preservation. The emperor had the corpse placed in a sarcophagus (sär kōf'a güs), where it has been ever since. The sword and regalia—the ornaments of royalty—were transported to Vienna, where they figure among the royal treasures.

The German people are very proud of the memory of Charles, and the peasantry of the little village of Lange Winkel (läng'ge wing'kl) believe that his spirit still haunts the place. It is said that the moon builds a silver bridge above the emerald Rhine, and over this bridge, sworded, mantled, and crowned, the mighty

emperor wends his way, bestowing his benediction on the vineyards, far and wide. The year the imperial shadow appears the country folk rejoice, for it assures them of rich fruitage.

Not long after the death of Charles the kingdom declined, as all great world empires had done. No ruler succeeded who had power enough to hold it together. Out of its dismemberment there eventually arose the modern states of France, Italy, and the present Germanic countries.



The Pass of Roncesvalles.

CHAPTER X

COUNT ROLAND AT RONCESVALLES.*

THE story of the great battle at Roncesvalles (rōn'-sē vāl'lēs) is one of the many legends concerning Roland (rō'lānd), one of the chief heroes of mediaeval romance. This story, which is the most heroic of all these tales, is adapted from the great French epic, the "Chanson (shōn sōn') de Roland," which tells of the hero's valor in the Pass of Roncesvalles. There is little historical basis for the story, and it is to the imagination of the poets that we are indebted for the elaborate epic in which the legend is preserved.

Perhaps it will not be unwise to recount, very briefly, what little history has to say on this subject before relating the legend.

*By permission of the St. Nicholas Magazine.

Charles the Great, having conquered the heathen Saxons of the north, and having induced them to accept the Christian faith, turned his attention to the unbelievers of Spain, the Mohammedan Moors, or Saracens.

In the year 778 A. D., when Charles was but thirty-six years old, he crossed the Pyrenees Mountains, and advanced into Spain to engage in war. He gained but few victories, and at the close of the year, for some reason, concerning which history is vague, he decided to abandon the Spanish campaign.

To protect the main army, he left a small force as rear guard, in the Pass of Roncesvalles, under the command of the Count Roland, Warden of the March of Brittany. In the mountains was a band of wild mountaineers, called Basques (bäskz). This mountain tribe, learning that the rear guard was in the Pass, and hoping for plunder, swooped down upon the Franks, surprised them, and slew them to a man. In this fight Count Roland was slain. This is all that history has to say, but legend has seized upon the incident and turned it into an immortal and moving story.

Each bard who handled the tale added new and picturesque features, till finally Charles is represented as two hundred years old, and is said to have conquered all Spain but the city of Saragossa (sar a gos'ä). The Basques are turned into Mohammedans and their surprise raid becomes the planned attack of a traitor. There are added a magic horn, a magic sword, fairies,

flights of angels, miracles, and a great vengeance by Charles.

Yet the story has a genuine historic value, for it pictures the fighting side of life in feudal France. It was very popular in mediaeval times, and it is said that the army of William the Conqueror charged into the Saxon army under Harold the Unfortunate at the great battle of Hastings, 1066 A. D., chanting the valor of Roland at Roncesvalles.

Having indiscreetly told the truth, it now becomes the narrator's duty to try to present the legend in such a way that the reader will forget the facts, while the legend becomes, at least temporarily, the truth. Here is the story.

Charles the Great, King of the Franks, had long been fighting the unbelievers in Spain. Before his victorious arms, castle and keep alike went down. All Spain was his, save only the city of Saragossa, commanded by the heathen king, Marsilus (mar sēl'us). Everywhere the standard of the Crescent was lowered, and that of the Cross raised.

King Marsilus hated Charles, for he feared the ultimate victory of that great king. "Could we but drive him from the country," he said; "then might we hope to regain our fortunes."

To him replied Blancandrin (blān cān'drīn), his wise counsellor, "There is but one way to be rid of this Charles, and that is to pledge to him that you will be converted to his faith and become his vassal. Send,

therefore, to him, I pray you, rich gifts, lions and bears, gold and silver and all manner of precious things, and bid the messenger who is to bring these, deliver also your promise to Charles to follow after him, and accept the Cross, if he will but return to France at once with his army."

Then was Marsilus like one gone mad. He leaped to his feet, and struck his hand upon the Koran; he frothed at the mouth. "I, become a dog of a Christian," he said. "Never! There is but one God and Mohammed is his Prophet," and he faced toward Mecca, the Holy City, after the manner of the Mohammedans.

Said Blancandrin, craftily, "Said I become a Christian? Nay, I said promise to become one if he will leave. He is so desirous of spreading his faith that he will be willing to believe. It is easy to believe what we wish to be true. He will take the bait, and go. When once he has left us, we can win back our lands and defy him."

King Marsilus hearkened unto the voice of Blancandrin, and sent his gifts and messengers to the court of King Charles at Cordova (kor'do vä).

Charles and his barons were in gay spirits, for they had taken fair spoil in the sweet city of Cordova. When the messengers arrived, they found the great king and thousands of his cavaliers in a fruitful orchard. Some were singing, some were lying on the grass dreaming of far-away France, and some were gaming the time away.

The renowned Charles was seated on his throne of gold, under a pine tree. Truly, he was a notable figure, full seven feet tall, with long white beard and hair.

To him the ambassadors did homage, and delivered the king's message. Charles listened thoughtfully. This was his heart's desire. It meant the completion of the Christian conquest of Europe. Still, he would not decide the question himself, but, after the fashion of the Franks, called his knights, and asked their advice as to what course to pursue.

Now, many of the knights were weary of the long campaign in the foreign lands. They rejoiced at the seeming chance to return to their homes and their loved ones. Among these was one named Ganelon (gä'ne lon), who afterwards became the traitor. He, desirous of quitting the heathen lands, urged the king to accept the offer made to him, and other nobles held with him. But the good Count Roland, Warden of the March of Brittany, spake in this wise to his uncle, the king, "Noble King, I am against this. Trust not Marsilus; he hath ever been a traitor. Slew he not the ambassadors we sent to him but a short time ago? Heed not the advice of Ganelon. Rather heed my advice. Take your army even to the walls of Saragossa, and reduce the city through siege. Leave not this fair land to the heathen."

Then one counsellor after another spake; some holding with Roland, and some with Ganelon. Amongst those who were in accord with Roland were his chosen

friend Oliver, the Archbishop Turpin, and the Twelve Peers, who were the greatest nobles of France.

After much discussion, the king decided to send a messenger to Marsilus, and offer him certain terms to consider. If he refused them, Charles determined to lead his army to Saragossa, and besiege it.

Then the king bade the knights choose who among them should be the messenger. Roland said, "I name the Count Ganelon. Ganelon believes Marsilus. Let him be the ambassador." Alas for Roland! He knew not when he named Ganelon, he named his own death.

Now Ganelon was a craven coward, and he was full of fear lest Marsilus should deal treacherously with him, and slay him. But Charles bade him go, for in the Frankish army the one first named for a trust had to accept the command.

When Ganelon rode on his way to Saragossa, his heart was full of hate. He plotted evil to Roland, of whom he was jealous because of the king's favor, and whom he blamed for having chosen him as ambassador.

When he arrived at Saragossa he found the king seated on a throne which was covered with rich silk.

"An ambassador from the great King Charles," announced a servant.

Crowds of courtiers surrounded the heathen ruler, but not a word spake any one, all being intent to learn the will of the mighty Charles. The king bade Ganelon approach. The courtier knelt before the throne. "Rise," said Marsilus, "and tell us the will of Charles."

Then Ganelon told him that Charles sent greetings, and his will was that Marsilus must accept the Christian faith and be baptized. Then one-half of Spain which Charles had taken from him should be his again, but the other half he must resign to the noble Roland. If Marsilus agreed not to these terms, then Charles would bring his hosts to Saragossa and reduce the city through siege.

When he heard this Marsilus was again like one gone mad. Again he leaped to his feet, and frothed at the mouth. "Never will I be a dog of a Christian!" He smote the Koran, and faced Mecca, the Holy City, "There is but one God and Mohammed is his Prophet!" In his wrath he was for slaying Ganelon as the messenger.

Now this mood of the king accorded well with the evil plans of Ganelon. Right well pleased was he to see the king thus disturbed. "Nay, slay me not," he said. "I have other words for you." As he spoke he looked long into the eyes of the king, and behold! Evil knew evil! Each knew the other was wicked.

"Ah, ha!" thought the king, "this man hath somewhat to say to me. This man is my own kind."

So he dismissed his officers, and when he was alone with Ganelon, he took counsel with him. "Will this Charles never be weary of warring?" he asked. "Surely 'tis time he sought rest in peace. Verily, 'tis said, he is quite two hundred years old. Why ceases he not from conquest?"

"Ah," replied Ganelon, craftily, "'tis not the fault of the king that he lingers in warfare. Never while Roland, and Oliver, and the Twelve Peers of France live will he cease, for ever they urge him on. So listen," he added. "I do so hate this Roland, and this Oliver, and these Twelve Peers of France, that I will play them into your hands to do with them as you will. When they are gone, Charles will fight no more." He offered to betray his own people!

Then was Marsilus over-glad, and together they plotted the ruin of Roland and his friends. And this was their evil plan. Ganelon was to return to Charles with Marsilus' pledge complying with all Charles' commands, on condition that he first pass on to France, and there await the coming of Marsilus. When Charles started to return, Ganelon was to persuade him to place Roland, and Oliver, and the Twelve Peers of France in the rear guard, with but a small force to attend them. Marsilus was to swoop down on these in the Vale of Thorns, which is the Pass of Ronces-valles, with three hundred thousand Saracens, in two divisions, and there slay the Franks to a man.

"What excuse shall I give him for not taking his faith first?" asked the king.

"Tell him you fear to accept it in your own land lest the people slay you. But you must send hostages to him. He will not believe without a hostage."

Then said the monarch, "Take my own son. He must believe me for my own son."

"Good!" said Ganelon, "he must surely believe for your own son. But, mind you, sir, if you keep not your compact, your son will be slain."

"Let him be slain," said the monarch. "What care I so I win back my lands!"

Their evil plan completed, the two traitors kissed each other, and Marsilus said, placing his hand on the Koran, and facing Mecca, the Holy City, "I swear by the laws of Mohammed, I will keep my share of the compact. There is but one God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!"

Then Ganelon, drawing his sword, raised it and said, "I swear by my sword I will keep my share of the compact."

So back rode Ganelon to the court of King Charles with his hostages, and rich gifts, to make his lies seem more like truth. King Charles and his knights, except Roland, Oliver, and the Twelve Peers, believed the traitor; and, full of joy that the last heathen stronghold was to become a Christian city, they prepared to return to fair France.

When Roland voiced his doubts to Charles, the king said, "Would a man give his own son as hostage unless he meant to keep faith? Would he give his own son to death?" But Roland was not persuaded.

That night the great king slept ill, and his dreams were troubled. It seemed to him that he was in a strange mountain pass. Ganelon came, and snatching from him his spear, smote it against a rock, and shat-

tered it into a myriad fragments, and behold! each fragment took unto itself wings, and flew up, up, up, even into heaven itself.

The king awakened, and sighed heavily. "A bad dream! Why dreamed I that Ganelon broke my spear?"

He slept again and dreamed yet another dream. This time he thought he was in his own palace at Aachen, and a bear came, and leaped upon him, and bit him to the bone. And behold, the bear had the face of Ganelon! A lion and a leopard then came and the three beasts fought furiously. And the king cried, "A great fight! And no man may say who shall win!"

Again the king awakened, for he was troubled, and he sighed heavily. "A bad dream! Why dreamed I that a bear, faced as Ganelon, bit me to the bone?" He slept no more that night.

Though his dreams troubled him, he told them to no man. In the morning he gave his orders for the onward march from Spain. "We must journey through dangerous passes in the mountains," said he. "Who shall command the rear guard?"

Then out spake Ganelon, the false, quickly, "I name the Count Roland. To whom but the noble Roland should the charge be given? Is not the Count Roland the greatest champion of all France?"

"Nay," said Charles, and his dreams, unbidden, arose in his thought. "I could ill spare Roland. Choose ye another."

A braver man than the good Count Roland never lived, and he said, "The charge is mine, good uncle. I have been named. Give me the charge."

Oliver, his beloved friend, cried, "Let me be with him, too." So said the Twelve Peers, and likewise the Archbishop Turpin. All played right into Ganelon's hands!

Then Charles, seeing he must yield, bade Roland keep half the army for his guard.

A prouder man than the good Count Roland never lived. "Nay," he said, "give me but twenty thousand Men of France, and I will defy the world!"

So the king gave him twenty thousand Men of France to be his guard.

Now the sword of Roland was called Durendal (dū'rēn dal). It was a magic sword, made by the fairies, and it was of such fine temper that naught could notch or shatter it. The hilt was full of sacred relics and precious stones, and engraved upon it was the name of God. Roland also had a magic horn, made by the fairies. This horn was of pure elephant ivory, and it was called Olifant (ol'i fant). The sound of the horn could be heard ninety miles away. These two, sword and horn, Roland carried with him, and likewise the good bow of Charles, which the king gave to him.

Then Roland mounted his horse, and with his comrades, Oliver and Turpin and the Twelve Peers, and the twenty thousand Men of France, bade farewell to Charles and his army.

Charles kissed Roland upon either cheek, commended him to God, and then rode on with his army through the dark Valley of Roncesvalles in perfect safety, for Roland guarded the rear. Voiceless and vast, the mountains loomed on either side of the narrow valley, and a somber sense of loneliness filled the heart of the mighty conqueror as he wound his way onward, for he thought of the beloved Roland left behind and he thought again of his dreams and he sighed.

Meanwhile, Marsilus gathered his army, a mighty host, and marched on toward Roncesvalles, where the heroes were. Bright flashed their armor in the glare of the sun, and so loud sounded their trumpets that Roland and his little company heard the sound and started.

Not the trumpets of King Charles, for Charles was gone the opposite direction from the sound. Every ear was tense.

Oliver looked at Roland. "The Saracens!" he said. "We shall battle them in this Pass."

Said Roland to Oliver, "Climb the hill, dear brother, look abroad, and tell me what you see."

So Oliver climbed the hill with speed, looked, and beheld the heathen host. Far as the eye could reach, it stretched out, an endless line, and he called to Roland, "Oh, brother! 'tis the mightiest host that ever appeared upon earth! We have been betrayed to the heathen!"

Hearing this, the Men of France murmured as one man, "Ganelon! Ganelon!"

But Roland bade them be still and prepare for the fight. "Fair lords of sweet France," he said, "quit you like men! We do battle here to-day for God and our great King Charles!"

Then said Oliver to his friend, Roland, "Blow your horn, Roland! Charles is not yet too far to hear its echo, and he will return to our help. Sound your horn, I say."

A braver man than the proud Count Roland never lived. "Nay, 'twould be a shame to sound it ere we have struck a blow. The harder the fight, the greater the glory. We shall smite the unbelievers, fear not!"

But Oliver only repeated wisely, "Blow your horn! 'Tis no disgrace. I have seen the heathen host. Far as the eye can reach, they press on—an endless line. Sound your horn, I say." Still Roland refused, jealous of his own honor.

Then up rode Archbishop Turpin. He, too, had been to the hill. "Fair lords of sweet France," he said, "yonder is a host of the heathen, such as mortal eye hath never seen before. To-day, I fear me, some of us must die, but they that do will be God's men, and he will place them in His Paradise. Kneel you down, therefore, that I may bless you all ere the fight begins."

So down knelt the army of the Franks, and the archbishop blessed them, in the name of God and His holy Son. Then rose the Men of France, cheered and uplifted, and ready to do battle to the uttermost for their God and their king. Right royal was their array



Archbishop Turpin blesses the French army before battle.

as they fronted the heathen foe, crying aloud the battle cry of King Charles. Thus the Saracens met the Christian knights in deadly battle in the Pass of Ronces-valles.

Now it was high noon when they rode into battle, and at that very hour a strange thing happened, miles and miles away, in far-off France. At middle-noon it became as night, and so fierce a storm broke over the land that all feared that the end of the world had come. But it was not the end of the world. It was only a sign, in his old home, of the coming death of Roland.

Doughty (*dou'ty*), indeed, did the Men of France prove themselves that day, but none equaled Roland in valor and daring. Right and left smote he with his good sword Durendal, and right and left fell the Saracens before his mighty blows. Oliver, too, fought bravely, as did also Turpin and the noble Twelve Peers. And the Men of France charged where their chiefs led, and laid about so mightily that of the first assailing hundred thousand Saracens but one man escaped from the field.

But, alas! though the ground was red with heathen blood, so many of the flower of France lay dead that there were left of the twenty thousand of King Charles' noble rear guard but sixty men. At what a cost these sixty sold their lives you shall yet learn.

When Roland saw the handful that was left of all those gallant knights, his heart broke for grief, and, deeming it now no shame to do so, he lifted his horn

of ivory and blew upon it a blast so loud and long that the blood burst from his mouth and his temples.

Ninety miles away, King Charles, on his march, heard the sound. He reined in his horse. "Halt!" he said, and the whole mighty army of the Franks halted. "Hark! 'Tis Roland's horn I hear. I fear me our men do battle back there in the dark passes of Spain."

But Ganelon, the false, spake hastily, "Nay, my lord, 'tis but a hunting horn you hear. Some hunter calls his dogs. Ride on! ride on! for the fair land of France!"

The king, half-persuaded, rode on. Yet a second time Roland blew his horn. Sore, and in great pain of heart was he, and the blast was borne again to the ears of Charles.

The king halted the second time, and again said, "Hearken! I hear it again. 'Tis the horn of my Roland! Heavy is my heart and full of fear for the noble men we left behind in the dark passes of Spain!"

But Ganelon, the traitor, spoke yet again, denying the sound as before. "'Tis not Roland's horn! 'Tis but a hunter. Ride on! Ride on! for the fair land of France!"

And the king, half-persuaded, rode on. Roland put his horn to his lips for the third time, and so deep was his anguish that the very grief of his soul was borne on that blast to the ears of Charles. Then the king halted for the third time. "'Tis Roland's horn!" he cried with a mighty voice. "Our men do battle!

Sound all the trumpets and ride back in hot haste to the dark passes of Spain!" He looked upon Ganelon as he spoke, and behold, a miracle! On that face the finger of God wrote the word—*Traitor!* Charles, seeing this, cried, "You! 'tis you! You have sold your own countrymen!" And in grief and wrath he flung him out to the knaves of the kitchen to bind and hold till he be come again.

Then, with every trumpet sounding, in the hope that Roland and the hard-pressed nobles of France might hear and take heart, the king and his army marched back through the mountains toward the Pass of Roncesvalles.

But, alas! the king's trumpets were not magic trumpets, made by the fairies and the sound carried not to Roncesvalles, and Roland heard it not.

And alas, again! while the king was yet too far away, a new host of the heathen bore down upon the sixty nobles that were left! When Roland saw this new host, twice fifty thousand spears, he knew that the end was near, but still he cried aloud his battle cry, and rode into the fray, smiting the heathen with his deadly Durendal.

Now in this fight it chanced that Oliver was wounded, even to death, and Roland, seeing it, bent over him in sore grief, and, as he did so, Oliver's already death-dimmed eyes knew him not, but, thinking him some heathen foe, lifted his arm, and smote him with the last desperate strength of a dying man. Roland

glanced the blow aside, and spoke sadly, and softly, "Oh, dear brother, dost know me not? I am your own Roland."

Then Oliver knew him and cried in grief, "Forgive me, brother. I knew you not, and are you hurt of me?"

"Freely do I forgive you," said the other, "nor am I hurt of you."

Then Oliver clasped his hand in Roland's, and prayed God to bless King Charles, the fair land of France, and his dear Roland. Then he closed his eyes, and behold! the heavens split in two, and a flight of angels came, and carried his soul up, up, up, as the fragments flew up in Charles' dream, even into heaven itself. And Roland wept alone.

So parted these two more than brothers.

And now Roland looked, and saw that there were but two left to meet the foe, himself and the Archbishop Turpin, and these two both sorely wounded. At this Roland lifted his horn of ivory, and blew upon it once more—a feeble blast this time. Yet King Charles heard it; he paused and said, "'Tis Roland's horn! But the man who blew that blast is a dying man. Speed you, my lords, that we may not be too late."

Therewith he caused all the trumpets in the army to be sounded, that Roland, perchance, might hear them. And this time the sound carried, even to the Pass of Roncesvalles, and Roland heard! "King Charles cometh!" he cried, "but too late!"

The heathens heard it, too, and they were in great fear. "King Charles cometh!" they cried. "We must flee!" But ere they fled the field, they smote once more at the heroes, Roland and Turpin. Roland they struck not, but Turpin fell mortally wounded.

Hearing King Charles' trumpets yet a second time, the heathens turned and rode away, leaving Roland, poor, dying Roland, alone on the field.

Roland knew that his death was at hand. So he stretched himself upon the plain and prepared for death, and his soul drifted away to that strange Border Line twixt Here and There. But ere he crossed the line, a wounded Saracen spied him thus.

"The Count Roland!" he cried, "and his magic sword Durendal! Could I but take that sword and place it in some Mohammedan mosque as a trophy, what glory were mine. All men, seeing it, would say, 'Durendal, the magic sword of Count Roland, taken on the great battle-field of Roncesvalles!' I will get it." He stretched forth his hand to take the sword. But the touch roused Roland, and back his soul flooded to him from the Border Line, and with it, his strength. Seizing Durendal, he smote the fellow and shattered his skull. "Who dares touch Durendal!" he cried, "who dares touch Roland!"

Then, gathering his strength again, and seeking to break his good sword so no heathen hand might filch it, he raised his arm and smote the sword, once—twice—thrice—upon a great rock near him. But Durendal

was a magic sword, made by the fairies, and naught could notch or shatter it, and it broke not, nor splintered, but to this day there remains a rent it made in the mountains. This rent is called the "Breach of Roland."

Seeing he could not break the sword, Roland laid himself down again, facing the foe, with all his wounds in the front, clasping in one hand his ivory horn, Oli-fant, and in the other the hilt of Durendal. Then he closed his eyes, and prayed to God, as Oliver had done, to bless King Charles and the fair land of France.

And lo! the heavens split in two, and there came a host from heaven and carried his soul up, up, up, even as the fragments flew up in King Charles' dream, into Paradise, where was already the soul of his friend Oliver.

So died Count Roland, Warden of the March of Brittany, Peer and Paladin (păl'a dĭn), in the Pass of Roncesvalles, where he fought a great fight.

Shortly after this, but alas! all too late, Charles came to the Pass. And when he saw the awful carnage, and beheld the bodies of all his nobles, his heart broke with its woe, and lifting up his voice, he wept, and the whole mighty army wept with him.

Then said one of his followers, "My Lord, the King, why wait we here? Let us seek the cursed heathen that did the deed, nor rest till we take our vengeance."

So the king set a guard over the bodies of the slain, and went with his host to pursue the foe.



The death of Roland at the Pass of Roncesvalles.

Now it was nigh sunset when they overtook them. The sun hung like a ball of fire upon the western rim of the world. If it dropped below the rim night would come on, and the foe would escape in the darkness. Then the king prayed, "Oh, God! stay the sun, nor let it be night till we have won our vengeance!"

And God heard the prayer of Charles and held the sun, blazing on the western rim, for full three days till every heathen was slain. Then it dropped behind the hills and night came to the world.

Having won his vengeance, Charles went back to Roncesvalles, and there gave honorable burial to all the slain who had fallen upon that fateful field. But the hearts of Roland, and Oliver, and Turpin, he had cut from their bodies and wrapped in fine silk. These he bore back with him to the fair land of France.

Now when Charles returned to Aachen, there came to his palace a sweet lady, and she said to him, "Oh, King, where is he whom they call the Count Roland? He is my promised husband."

"Alas!" said Charles, and he sighed heavily, "the Count Roland is no more. He died in the Vale of Thorns, where he fought a great fight."

And behold! at the word, she fell dead at the feet of the king.

As for Ganelon, the traitor, he was condemned to be tied to four horses, and thus torn to pieces.

All these things are said and told in the "Song of Roland."



The knighting of Ogier, the Dane.

CHAPTER XI

OGIER THE DANE

THE story of Ogier (ó jér) the Dane is told in an old chanson de geste (shon sôn' de zhest'), or song of history. Ogier is also known as Holger Danske (hōl'ger Däns'ke). He was one of the famous paladins of Charlemagne, and a companion of Roland, Oliver, and the other peers of the emperor's court. The legend concerning him is one of the most popular in romantic literature.

The king of Denmark was very happy. He was the father of a beautiful boy whom he named Ogier.

When Ogier was born six fairies came to his crib.

Each fairy put a blessing on him. They said he should be all things that are nice and good. The youngest fairy said he should not die, but should live with her in fairyland.

Ogier grew up to be a fine young man. He was trained to be a knight and a hero. When he was sixteen years old, he went to live at the court of Charlemagne, the great king of the Franks.

Charlemagne was a wonderful man, of colossal (kō lōs'äl) stature. He had conquered all western Europe and was Emperor of Rome. He slept in a bed surrounded by one hundred wax candles and guarded by one hundred knights.

Charles was very favorably impressed with Ogier, for the boy was handsome, of very open countenance, courteous, brave, and amiable. Ogier was knighted by Charles himself—a very rare honor. It happened in this wise. The king was called to Italy to defend Rome against the heathen Saracens, who were threatening the country. The royal banner of France, called the Oriflamme (or'i fläm), was carried in the battle by a knight named Alory (älō ry). This knight, hard-pressed by the foe, became panic-stricken, lowered his banner, and turned to retreat.

Ogier was only a squire, an attendant on a knight, at this time, and did not bear arms. He was watching the battle. As soon as he saw the standard-bearer turn his horse, he rushed forward to him, and compelled him to dismount and disarm. He then donned the

armor himself, mounted the horse, seized the Oriflamme, and bearing it aloft, rode into battle, where he fought with such skill and daring that he attracted the attention and admiration of the whole army.

In the fray, Charlemagne himself was set upon by a party of powerful Saracen knights who had him at a great disadvantage, and were about to slay him, when Ogier went to the emperor's rescue. Right deftly he dealt the Saracens such vigorous blows that they scattered as chaff before a hurricane, and left the emperor unharmed.

When the battle was over and Charlemagne found that it was Ogier, the boy, who had done such valiant feats of arms, he drew from its sheath his famous sword, Joyeuse, bade the lad kneel on the battle-field, and smote him thrice on the shoulder with the flat of the blade, thus giving him the accolade (ăk'kō lād'), the recognition which made him a member of the noble order of knighthood.

The emperor had a son, Charlot (shär'lot). Charlot had not distinguished himself at all in the battle, and he was very jealous and envious when he saw how his father honored the valor of the youthful Dane. His heart filled with the venom of hate for Ogier. He was angrier than ever at the elaborate celebrations in honor of Ogier's knighting. The young champion received many gifts—armor, weapons, and golden spurs. The best gift was a noble sword which came to him from one of his fairy friends, the enchantress Morgana

(môr gä'nä). The sword was of invincible steel, bright and glistering, and it bore the words, "I am Cortana" (kôr ta'nä).

For many years Ogier remained in the service of the great Charlemagne. He had many marvelous adventures and became renowned throughout the world. He married a beautiful maiden and became the father of a noble son whom he named Baldwin.

Baldwin grew up to be like his father, handsome, able, affable and brilliant. All the court loved him except Charlot, the emperor's son, who hated him for his father's sake. One day, in a violent rage because the lad had defeated him in a game of chess, Charlot smote and slew the fair boy, and cared not for his deed, for he thought no retribution could befall the son of the emperor.

When Ogier learned of the villainous deed, he was beside himself with grief and rage, for he well-nigh adored his son, and he vowed he would have the life of the slayer. Charlot, in fear, fled to the banquet hall of the king for protection, and to the very hall went the avenger.

The king's cup-bearer was about to serve the king with wine. Still holding the cup, he sought, at the command of the king, to stay the rush of Ogier. Enraged at this interference, Ogier seized the cup from the bearer's hand, and dashed the wine full in the face of the king. This was a deadly insult, not to be lightly forgiven. Ogier was arrested and thrown into prison.

Here, to reduce his proud spirit, he was ordered a meager diet. His daily supply of food was to consist of a quarter of a loaf of bread, one piece of meat, and a quarter of a cup of wine.

As Ogier was a man of immense size, being quite seven feet tall and correspondingly broad, this meager diet promised speedy starvation.

His jailer was the good Archbishop Turpin, the chief religious officer of the court. Turpin dearly loved Ogier and resorted to a stratagem to provide more liberal rations for the prisoner.

Each day he had two bushels of flour made into one immense loaf of bread, one-fourth of which was given to the prisoner. The piece of meat furnished was a quarter of a sheep or a calf. As for the wine, it was measured in a cup having a capacity of twenty quarts made specially for the purpose.

Needless to say, Ogier, thus liberally supplied, thrived. The good archbishop was troubled with no qualms of conscience, and daily reported to the emperor that the prisoner received the prescribed menu—a quarter of a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a quarter of a cup of wine.

Ogier was kept a prisoner for a long time, but a new Saracen uprising threatened the realm and the emperor felt the need of his services. The Saracens had offered to settle the trouble by a single contest with a Christian knight. No one in the court was willing to be the champion, and Charlemagne offered Ogier his

freedom on the condition that he would undertake the contest.

Ogier made a counter condition. "I will battle for the cause, if you will deliver to me your son Charlot to be dealt with as I choose, for the murder of my son."

To this condition the emperor finally agreed. The alarmed and guilty Charlot was brought, bound, to the court, and delivered to Ogier for vengeance.

"Kneel," commanded the knight to the culprit. He did so and all looked to see him slain. But Ogier only cut the cords that bound him. "Arise," he said, "and be free. I forgive you."

At this noble conduct court and emperor alike cheered admiringly. Then Ogier prepared for the duel with the Saracen.

Now Ogier was a skillful swordsman. He fought valiantly, but unavailingly, against the Saracen, who seemed to bear a charmed life. Every time the heathen was wounded he galloped away to one side of the field and rubbed the wound with some ointment, which he took from a bottle hanging at his saddle's side. At the touch of the balm the wound healed. In the course of the battle, Ogier cut the left arm of the Saracen clean from his body. At once with his other hand the Saracen picked up the severed member, touched it with the balm, and set it in place. Instantly it grew fast to his body.

Ogier now understood that it was the balm that



But Ogier only cut the cords that bound him.

saved his adversary, and he cleverly unhorsed him, and drove him far from the reach of his saddle. Then he raised his good sword and with one blow smote the fellow to death. Thus was won a great cause on that heroic day.

Charles was so pleased with the valor of Ogier that he sent him to Judea to fight the heathen in that land. Having reduced the land to submission, Ogier determined to return home and embarked for France.

All went well for a time and the vessel sailed onward, true to her course, till suddenly, in spite of the helmsman's efforts, the ship veered to one side and made straight for a huge rock that loomed up in the sea.

The rock was a magic lodestone, and drew all vessels to itself. Ogier's ship, unable to resist the spell, sped swiftly toward the rock. Smash! Crash! It shattered into splinters like a cockle shell, and all aboard were dashed into the sea, where they miserably perished—all but Ogier, who was washed ashore clinging to a spar.

When he recovered somewhat from the rude shock he had received, he began to investigate the country. It was evidently uninhabited, for not a sign of a human being was to be seen. While he was thinking of his fate, he was startled by the approach of two strange looking dragons covered with hard, glittering scales. Behind them galloped a wonderful white horse that breathed forth fire from his nostrils. Of course, you

have guessed these creatures were sent to Ogier by a fairy.

Dragons and horses that breathe fire are somewhat alarming, but the actions of these were very friendly. They fawned upon Ogier and the horse knelt before him and seemed to say, "Mount me and ride."

Ogier accepted the mute invitation, and mounted. The horse rose at once and darted off like the wind. On, on, over hill, and moor, and mountain, till he came at length to a lovely valley in the midst of which stood a splendid palace surrounded by magnificent gardens.

Once in the gardens, the horse checked his rapid career and knelt beside a beautiful fountain. Ogier dismounted, for he saw approaching a lady of rare beauty, carrying a wreath of flowers.

She spoke kindly to him. "Wear my favor," she said. "You shall be king of this realm." So speaking, she placed the chaplet of flowers on his brow.

No sooner was it on his head than a wonder happened. All memory of his former life vanished. His wars, his home, his friends, his king, were alike all forgotten. He saw only the lovely fairy and desired only to be with her. He was enchanted, for this was the fairy Morgana, one of the six who had attended his birth, and this realm was Avalon (*av'a lon*), the Isle of Apples, Fairyland itself!

Now, in the realm of Morgana, years passed like days. For a hundred years Ogier dwelt in the



The horse, carrying Ogier, knelt beside a beautiful fountain.

enchanted region and knew naught of the passage of time. Sweet as a dream were the years. Never wind, nor storm, nor hail, nor grief, nor care, nor phantoms of yesterday vexed there his calm content. This condition might have lasted forever had Ogier never lost the crown of oblivion. But one day the fairy snatched it in sport from his head.

In an instant his memory revived. All the desires of his natural state surged over him. He yearned for his old friends, and especially for King Charles.

He begged the fairy to release him and permit him to return to his own realm. At first she refused, but as he would not wear the crown again, and grieved so deeply, she finally agreed to let him go.

Full of joy, he mounted Papillon (pä pē yōn'), the horse that breathed fire, and rode to the shore. Here he met his friends, the two glittering-scaled dragons, who showed him by motions that they would carry him and his horse across the sea. So Ogier mounted one of them and Papillon the other, and they leaped into the sea and swam across the water to the shores of France. After their passengers were safely landed, the obliging dragons sprang again into the sea and swam back to the Lodestone Rock.

Ogier, mounting Papillon, rode on till he came to the city of Paris. The changes he saw on all hands amazed him. He could hardly understand the speech of the people. Not one of his friends could he find.

The nobles to whom he talked were as much aston-

ished at him as he was at them, and when he asked to see Charlemagne and the lords of his court they thought he must be mad.

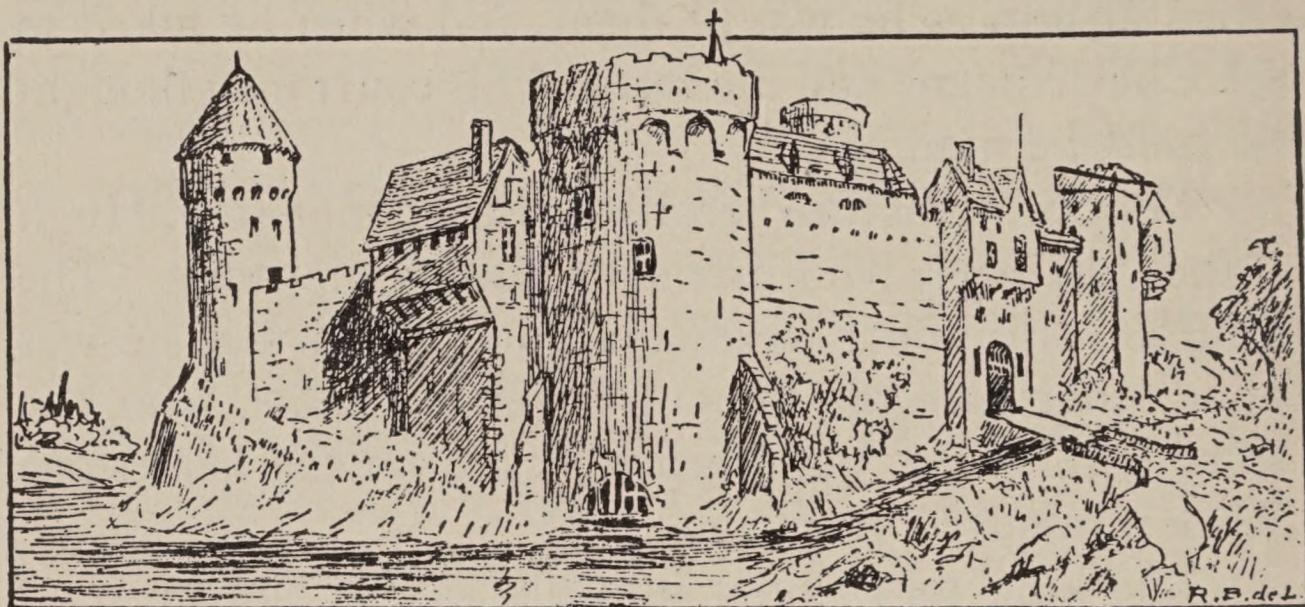
They brought him before the ruling monarch, Hugh Capet (kā'pet), who listened to his whole story. The king and his court were amazed to learn that he was none other than the famous Ogier the Dane, who, the story-tellers said, had been wrecked on the Lodestone Rock a hundred years ago.

The king took Ogier into his service and he went to war again and fought his old enemies, the Saracens. He always rode on Papillon, who so frightened the heathens by his fire-breathings that they retreated in disorder.

In the course of time the king died, and shortly after a marriage was arranged between Ogier and the widowed queen. But the union was frustrated, for just as the twain knelt at the altar, the queen saw a hand place a strange chaplet of flowers upon Ogier's brow, and in the twinkling of an eye he disappeared into air.

He had been again enchanted by Morgana, the fairy, who did not wish him to marry another. With the crown of oblivion on his head, he permitted the fairy to transport him again to the sweet Isle of Avalon. There he still lives with her, and a court of splendid knights, such as those of the great King Arthur, who is in her realm, being healed of a grievous wound.

Perhaps, some day, Ogier will again lose his crown and return as he did before.



A feudal castle.

CHAPTER XII

THE GROWTH OF FEUDALISM

AFTER Charlemagne's death the dismemberment of his kingdom was rapid. In less than fifty years it was in three divisions governed by his grandsons. One division was called Lotharingia (*lō tha rin'jiä*), in honor of its ruler, Lothaire (*lō tar'*). A portion of that region is still called Lorraine (*lo rān'*). Another division was called East Frankland, which name was afterwards changed to Germany. The third territory was West Frankland, which became France. The first king of this territory bore the suggestive name of Charles the Bald.

The kingdoms all had their own troubles, for there were still marauders in the farther north who were not

yet Christianized. These were the Danes, with whom we shall deal in our story of England, and the Scandinavians, known as the Northmen, or Normans. One of these tribes from Sweden reached over the Baltic Sea, and under their renowned chief, Ruric (rōō'rik), in the ninth century, conquered the Slavonic (sλ vōn'ik) tribes of Russia, and there established the Russian monarchy, whose history for centuries after was a series of wars and rumors of wars.

Another branch of these bold vikings, as they were called, under the leadership of a chief known as Rollo the Ganger, ravaged the coast of France in the tenth century. This Rollo was an immense fellow, of such mighty stature that none of the small horses used by the Northmen could support his weight, and he had to walk while others rode, thus earning the name Rollo the Ganger, which means *Walker*.

With his band of bold Northmen, Rollo took the city of Rouen (rō on'), and even besieged the city of Paris, the capital of the French kingdom. These proceedings much alarmed the reigning monarch, known to fame as Charles the Simple. He proposed to give Rollo and his Northmen a slice of France on which to settle, provided they would acknowledge him as overlord and cease from war. Rollo agreed.

Now, the service of doing homage, and becoming vassal to an overlord, required that the vassal, upon swearing allegiance, should kiss his lord's foot. When this ceremony was explained to Rollo, he vigorously



Paris, the capital of the French kingdom, besieged by Rollo.

declared he would have no part in it; he would kiss no man's foot.

Things began to look dark and trouble loomed up again, but some resourceful mind suggested that Rollo delegate one of his men to perform the kissing part of the service. So Rollo selected a sturdy fellow, who at first objected to the act as vigorously as his master, but finally consented.

When the day of the service arrived, the French king sat on a high stool in grand state, surrounded by his nobles, and Rollo, the Northman, attended by his pirate band, swore the oath of allegiance, and then beckoned his deputy to kiss the king's foot.

Instead of kneeling to the ceremony, as was expected of him, the Northman reached down and snatched the king's foot up to his mouth; and the proceeding upset the king. Nor did the suppressed smiles of his own nobles, and the unsuppressed guffaws (*gūf-faz'*) of his new subjects, serve to restore his equilibrium (*ē'kwi lib'ri um*). However questionably it may have been performed, the service was legal, and Rollo was thus formally, or rather, informally, made Duke of Normandy, and vassal to the French crown.

Rollo no sooner became a lord than he reformed and compelled his pirates to reform also. He absolutely forbade robbery and murder. His men soon found out that he meant what he said, for every time a man infringed upon the law he was hanged.

These Northmen were very adaptable. They soon

affiliated with the refined French people, adopted their dress, manners, religion, and speech; and in less than a hundred years they had forgotten their Northman traditions, and were good Frenchmen; their leaders making powerful Dukes of Normandy, as their territory, the northern part of France, was called.

After the settlement of Normandy, the kingdom of France, fully established, pursued her varying history to the present time.

In that division of Charlemagne's kingdom known as Germany, there was no union among the states composing it for many years. It never became a strong single country with a united government till the rise of Prussia in modern times. The story of its earlier centuries is a dreary record of internecine (*in'ter nē-sīn*) quarrels.

Italy, during these same centuries, was a scene of riot and disorder. Her fortunes became involved with those of Germany. She was torn by dissensions that arose between Pope and Emperor. In the midst of these troubles during the twelfth century, independent cities arose that grew to great importance in the commercial world—Venice, Florence, Pisa (*pē'zä*), and Genoa. This last name brings to mind the heroic man Christopher Columbus, and America!

In the midst of these struggles a new form of government, known as the Feudal System, was established in all these countries. The main idea of this system was that of land reward for military service. It prob-

ably had its origin in the old German custom common to the Teutonic tribes in the early days of their forest life, of rewarding valor and fidelity with the gift of a horse, or a shield, or a weapon.

In those early days land was not a great prize in the eyes of the wandering tribes, but when they learned the lessons of civilization, no reward was more desirable.

In the days of the Dark Ages, it was often difficult for conquerors to hold the lands they subdued. To do so the chiefs needed many fighting men to be ready to respond to their calls. To secure these men, the rulers began the custom of dividing the conquered lands among their followers, upon the condition of service in war. Land thus given away was called a fief (fēf), or feud. The person giving it was called the lord, and the one receiving it, the vassal. This arrangement was really a renting of land for service instead of for money.

A fief, or feud, might be large or small—a few acres, or a great kingdom. A vassal might divide the lands given to him among his own followers, he being their lord, while he remained vassal to the lord who had bestowed the land upon him. These vassals might in turn become lords to vassals under them.

This made the Feudal System a sort of chain where a man was lord to one below him, and vassal to one above. The king claimed to hold the entire country from God, or "By the grace of God." But he really held it by the grace of the sword of conquest.

When a man became a vassal he went through the ceremony of homage. Kneeling before his lord, he swore fealty in all ways. After the oath, a kiss was exchanged, and the lord placed in the vassal's hand a clod of earth or a branch of a tree. This was the act of investiture, and established the vassal's right as the holder of a feud.

The chief duties of the vassal were to follow his lord in battle and to pay certain taxes.

In return for these services, the lord pledged his protection to the vassal. To obtain this protection, men who had private property often gave it to a lord and became his vassal for it for the sake of his protection.

The vassals were bound to military service, and so they did not till the soil or work at trades. All such labor was done by serfs, who were mere fixtures on an estate and were deeded away with it just as the cattle were.

At first the vassals were nearly all foot-soldiers, but it soon became apparent to the lords that they must have mounted soldiers. This led to the creation of the cavalry force, which was the beginning of feudal chivalry.

With the growth of feudalism, the authority of the king lessened; for every fief was like a little state ruled over by its own lord. The lord held his own courts, punished offenders, settled disputes, and even coined money. Although the lords swore fealty to the king,

he was quite at their mercy, for feudalism was really a government "Of the lords, by the lords, and for the lords." This was infinitely better than the despotic (děs pōt'ik) Asian governments, "Of the king, by the king, and for the king," but it was far inferior to our own ideal of government, "Of the people, by the people, and for the people."

As long as Charlemagne lived, feudalism was of slow growth, for he kept the government in his own hands; but after his death, when pirates and pagans began assailing the different parts of the empire, the protection afforded by the feudal system caused it to spread rapidly. It insured the raising of an army when required, with the least possible delay.

Feudalism as a government was general all over Europe till the fourteenth century. After the discovery and application of gunpowder it rapidly declined, for before the boom of the cannon the walls of the castles, the strongholds of feudalism, were of little avail.

The great castles in which the lords dwelt were really walled towns. The site of a castle was generally a rocky eminence. This eminence, if not upon a river bank, was girdled about by moat, or ditch, generally twelve feet deep, and twenty or more feet wide. The wall built along the edge of the moat was ten feet thick, and fifty feet high. The watch towers on the wall rose to a hundred feet. The great gateway with the barred door was called the portcullis. Spanning the moat was

a drawbridge, one end of which was made fast to the castle by hinges. In the center of the court, enclosed by the walls, was the great tower or keep of the castle, rising often two hundred feet above the surrounding land. In the walls were store-houses, smithies, kennels, stables, and servants' quarters.

In time of war, in his grim fortress, with drawbridge up and portcullis down, the lord might ensconce himself and defy the king.

Attacks were made on these castles by throwing rocks from catapults (kăt'a pŭltz), or filling up the moat and running battering rams up against the walls.

Ruins of these castles are to be found all over Europe, and to each ruin is attached a legend.

The most famous of all these stories of castles is that of the Mouse Tower on the Rhine. In 914 A. D., in the time of Hatto (hăt'tō), the bishop of Mainz (mīntz), there came a famine on the land, and the poor suffered greatly. Now Hatto had full granaries (grăn'a rēz), but, though he knew the people about him were starving, he would not do a thing to relieve their distress. So insistent they became in their appeals that he made a cruel plan to be rid of them. He invited them all to come to his barn at a certain hour. Thinking, of course, that he was going to give them grain, they, full of joy, arrived promptly at the appointed hour. There were so many of them that the barn was crowded to suffocation. When it would hold no more, the cruel bishop ordered the doors to be closed and

locked. The startled people could not understand this, but they soon learned what it meant, for black smoke and tongues of flame told the story. The bishop had fired the barn! Frantic with terror, the wretched captives begged to be set free, but he was remorseless. "You are nothing but rats," he said. "Die like rats."

The bishop, satisfied with his work of destruction, went home to his castle for a feast, after which he went to bed and slept. The next day he found a strange thing had happened in the night. Rats had gnawed his picture out of its frame. He was quite appalled at this, for he was superstitious, and thought it portended bad luck.

While he was meditating on this peculiar occurrence, a servant rushed in, full of excitement. "Flee," he cried, "flee! An army of rats of incredible numbers is pouring down on the castle."

The bishop rushed to the window to see. Yes, there they were—not as single spies but in battalions! He tore out of the castle, and, mounting his horse, raced off like mad. Like mad marched the army of rats after him. Faster, faster, he urged his steed to the river. He reached it, and leaping into a skiff, rowed desperately out to a tower on an island.

He breathed freely—he was safe! He barred the tower. No rat could get there! no rat could swim the river! But he was mistaken. When they reached the river, the avengers boldly dashed into the waters, and swam across to the tower. There they set their

sharp teeth to work, and the trembling bishop heard them gnaw, gnaw, gnaw! till the holes were through. Then, in they swarmed, and wrought their work of vengeance.

In at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls, helter skelter they pour,
And down from the chimney, and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the bishop they go!

They whetted (hwet'ed) their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick at the bishop's bones,
They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him!

The bishop knew what you have guessed—these avengers were the souls of his victims whom he had condemned to die like rats.

To this day you can see on the Rhine River, the Rat Tower of Bishop Hatto.

Some of these fortress-castles were battered down by besieging catapults and rams, but one, at least, was swallowed up in the earth.

Near Andernach (än'der näch), on the Rhine, is a deep lake. Where the waters of this lake spread was once a hill, on the summit of which a wicked robber-knight had a great castle.

By chance one day this knight ate of a certain magic fish, and immediately he understood the lan-

guage of all living creatures. His marvelous power did not bring him great joy, however, for he only learned through it how people hated him.

One day he overheard the conversation of two hens. It alarmed him.

Said the first hen, "At sunset, to-night, because of the evil done by our wicked lord, the castle shall sink into the earth."

"Shall we, too, perish?" asked the second hen.

"Yea," replied the first, "the innocent often suffer because of the guilty, and besides, one might as well perish that way as to die in the soup."

If the hens were resigned to perish, the knight was not. He determined to escape, so, hurrying, he gathered some valuable jewels, and mounted his horse to ride away from the castle. Just as he reached the gateway, the sun set, and with a roar like judgment day, the ground opened, and castle, knight, and hens, too, were swallowed in the abyss (a *bis'*).

Above the place arose the deep waters of a lake. At sunset from these waters is reflected a peculiar fiery glow, and the country folk along the Rhine say this light is a reflection from the warm regions where the wicked robber-knight is spending eternity.

There is an amusing legend about the castle Rheingrafenstein (rīn gräf'ēn stīn). This is built upon a very inaccessible rock. When the builder of the castle was contemplating its erection, he was puzzled about how to get it accomplished.

Suddenly before him appeared a creature with horns and hoofs, and smelling of sulphur. This, of course, was the evil one from the lower regions.

"I will build the castle for you in a single night," said the evil spirit, "if you will give me, as payment, the soul of the first living thing that looks from a window when the building is finished."

The knight agreed to this condition, and, sure enough, the very next day there stood the castle, perfect in every detail.

But the nobleman was sad—the condition attached to the deed troubled him. He told his wife the story. "If we enter," he said, "some one of us will be sure to look out of the window and will be lost."

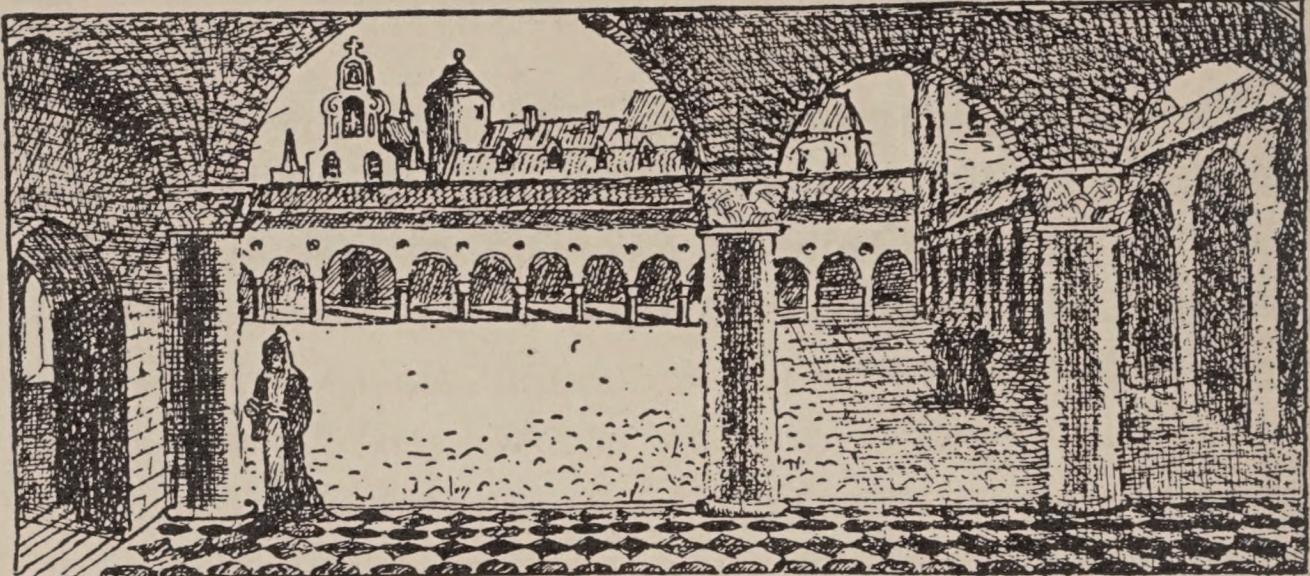
The lady thought a moment. "It pays a man to have a wife," she said. "I have a plan. Follow me and fear not."

So her husband, knowing she had good sense, let her manage things. Riding on a donkey, and followed by her family, she entered the castle. The donkey soon learned why he, too, was brought in.

The lady, taking off her own shawl, pinned it about the donkey's neck, and put on his head her own night-cap with a large frill about it. and then led him to the window.

The donkey naturally looked out, and immediately the evil one, on the watch, flew up, caught him by the neck, and pulled him through the window. "I have you, my lady!" he cried triumphantly. You see the

frill and the shawl deceived him, but he soon discovered his error, for the alarmed donkey began to bray vigorously. Disgusted at the trick played on him, the evil one dropped his captive, for there was no room in his kingdom for donkeys.



A French monastery.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GROWTH OF MONASTICISM

MONASTICISM (mo năs'ti sĭz'm) is the Church institution which deals principally with the life of religious retirement pursued by monks in monasteries. This institution dominated the spiritual life of the Middle Ages just as feudalism dominated the political life of the same period.

The monastic form of religious life was not peculiar to Christianity. We find it connected with many other religions, notably with the Buddhist (bōōd'dăst) faith, but it is with its Christian phase we are chiefly concerned.

As a Christian institution it was the outgrowth of hermit life. In the early days when Christianity was struggling for existence, certain adherents of the faith

became imbued with the idea that they could lead a purer life and consecrate themselves to the service of God more completely by living in solitude apart from the distractions and temptations of the world. Therefore they retired to unfrequented places, where, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," they could meditate undisturbed upon holy things. These recluses were called hermits, or anchorites (*än'kō rīts*), and many of them had very distorted ideas as to what would be pleasing to God.

Believing that mortification of the flesh insured the salvation of the soul, many of the hermits treated themselves with great austerity (*äs ter'ī ty*), choosing for their habitations bare caves, mouldy cellars, unhealthful swamps, or uncomfortable pillar tops.

Sometimes they whipped their own bodies till the blood ran; they imposed upon themselves the discomforts of filth, letting their hair grow long and tangled, never washing themselves, and permitting flies and other insects to swarm upon them and bite their flesh into sores.

One of these half-mad fanatics was St. Simeon Stylites (*sim'ē on Sti li'tēz*), who lived in Syria from 390 to 549 A. D. This man was an "air-martyr," or pillar saint, and dwelt for "thrice ten years" upon a pillar top, having scarcely room to turn around. Unshielded from the bitter elements, he endured super-human pangs.

Lord Alfred Tennyson made the experiences of this

self-scourged air-martyr the subject of a noble poem, entitled "St. Simeon Stylites." The lines present a vivid picture of a hermit's insane fanaticism (få năt'i-siz'm).

Of course, such folly as this was not pleasing to God at all, and after a time the hermits themselves realized this and changed their mode of worship. They gradually abandoned their isolated abodes and began to live together in communities which eventually became the great orders of monasticism, their dwellings being called monasteries.

One of these orders was the famous Benedictine (bĕn'e dĭk'tĭn) Order, so called for its founder, St. Benedict, who lived in the sixth century. This monk prohibited the fanatic behavior of the hermits, decreed that the members of the order must respect the body and keep it clean, eat proper food, and live like rational beings.

A costume was selected which was to distinguish the order. Each monk was to wear a coarse black robe, with a cowl, or hood, which could be drawn over the head, and the robe was to be girdled at the waist with a cord. Because of their black gowns the Benedictines came to be known as the Black Monks. Other orders founded at later times were called from the colors of their respective robes the White Monks and the Grey Monks.

The code established by St. Benedict required obedience to three essential laws, poverty, chastity, and

obedience. The law of poverty required a monk to renounce all private ownership in earthly possessions; by the law of chastity he was forbidden to marry, while that of obedience compelled him to submit unquestioningly to the will of his superior officer, the abbot.

St. Benedict further decreed that the members of his order should dwell together, secluded from the world, in religious houses, called monasteries, which were walled about to shut out the intrusions of the world.

Each monastery was so ordered that it was a sort of settlement that supplied for itself all the necessities of life, and rendered communication with the outside world needless.

A monastery was not one building, but several, surrounded by closely mown lawns, with gardens and fountains. One of the buildings was a church or chapel, built cross-form, the long portion being divided into a nave for the worshipers, and a choir for the monks and singers. The arms of the cross were called the transept, in which were kept the sacred relics through which miracles of healing were claimed to be wrought. These relics were bones of saints and articles once touched by holy hands.

The churches, in which the Latin Mass and other services were celebrated, were miracles of architecture. They were generally constructed with vaulted roofs, and round-headed or pointed windows of stained glass

picturing events in the life of Christ or of some saint. Their slender spires, crowned with holy emblems pointing heavenward, seemed as monitors to the soul, urging it to lofty aspirations. Rare ivories and enamels, magnificent mosaics, rich embroideries, and service vessels of gold and silver added to the splendors of these holy sanctuaries.

The church was the most beautiful of the monastery buildings. Others of less imposing grandeur were the refectory and the dormitory. In the refectory, which was the dining room, the monks ate their meals in silence while one of their number read from the Bible in Latin. The dormitory was the sleeping apartment, and in this each monk had a separate cell sparingly furnished with a rude board bed, and a stool to kneel upon at prayer.

Besides these buildings there were many workshops where the monks toiled at different trades, for the rules of the institution prescribed definite labor for all members of the monastery. "To work is to pray," was one of the mottoes of the order. So the monks were very busy. They tended the gardens, planted, sowed, and reaped; cooked their food and washed their dishes; swept and dusted; tanned leather and made shoes; wove cloth and fashioned garments; and worked with the hoe, the fork, the rake, and the ax.

The more learned monks spent much time in the scriptorium (*skrip tō'ri ūm*), or library. In this they wrote their famous illuminated manuscripts done on

vellum, a fine kind of parchment, using rude goose quills dipped in many colored inks. These manuscripts were fashioned into scrolls, or were bound in boards which were sometimes covered with pictures or fine cloth. All these manuscripts were written in Latin, which was the only language of educated men. The stories they told, which are sometimes too marvelous for belief, are our chief record of happenings in Europe during the Dark Ages. In reading these we must learn to distinguish between fact and fancy.

The priests spent a portion of their time in the cloister porch. This porch, with its colonnade of beautiful columns, extended about the dining and sleeping apartments. Up and down the porch paced the monks with bent bodies and bowed heads, piously telling the beads of their rosaries. The bent body and bowed head were indicative of humility of soul and were enjoined by the laws of St. Benedict, who said, "Let the monk always show humility, not only in his heart, but with his body also. Let him always be with bowed head, his eyes fixed upon the ground, and let him remember every hour that he is guilty of his sins."

The growth of monasticism was very rapid, and it spread throughout all Christian Europe. In time the orders grew immensely wealthy through the pious gifts of kings or princes or nobles. Vast tracts of lands were deeded to them, which they improved and cultivated, thus aiding in bringing about a revival of agriculture.

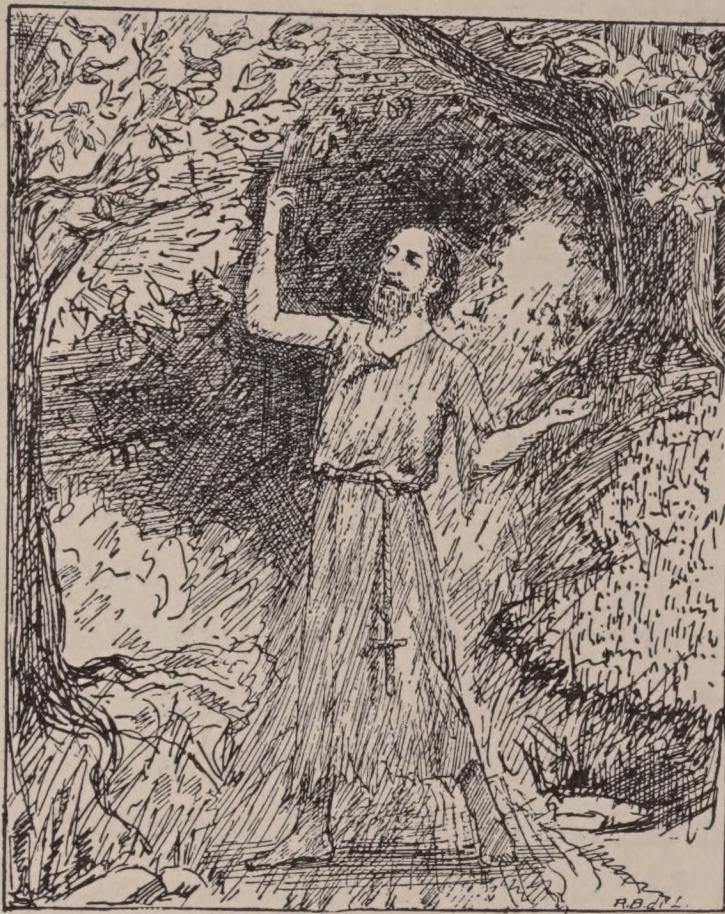
Early in the thirteenth century another style of

monastic life was introduced into Europe by St. Francis of Assissi (à sē'sē), who founded the Mendicant (mēn'-di kant) Order of Begging Friars. Through the decrees of this order, the members, instead of secluding themselves in monasteries, and spending their time in private prayer and penance, concerned chiefly about their own salvation, had to become evangelists, devoting themselves principally to the spiritual interests of others.

The vows of the Mendicants enjoined humility, love, and obedience. The vow of humility embodied a vow of poverty which not only forbade individual possessions by the members, but also by the order, which must rely entirely upon alms for its support. The Mendicants became a very powerful organization, and, coarse-robed and barefooted, had scant affinity for the well-housed, well-fed, well-clothed monks of the great monasteries. The Mendicants, from the different colors of their robes, were known as the "Black Friars," "Grey Friars," and "White Friars."

To St. Francis, the gentle founder of the new order, a great many miracles are attributed, among which is one that credits him with preaching his gospel to a company of birds who gravely listened to him with much better attention than many humans pay to their spiritual advisers.

Every monastery, too, had a record of wonderful miracles, and many beautiful, even if unproven stories are told of them. According to tradition, the monks



St. Francis of Assissi preaching to the birds.

of one monastery in particular were under the guardianship of the fairies, or "wee folk," as they were called. The monks of this monastery always received a three-days' notice of approaching death. The one about to pass away would find in his stall in the chancel a certain snow-white flower, and he knew by the favor that his hour was at hand, and accordingly spent the remaining interval in prayer and sacred meditation.

The monks had many stories about God's reproof for vain-glorious pride. Perhaps the tenderest of these stories is this. In a certain monastery there was an imbecile boy whom the monks had, as it were, adopted.

This boy did the chores and did them well, but it was impossible to teach him his prayers or hymns. He seemed to understand nothing but the phrase, "I love God." This he repeated on all occasions. His stupidity irritated the monks, and they feared his chances of salvation were very slim.

Said one, "How he wearies me with his everlasting, 'I love God!'" Much good it will do him on Judgment Day."

Now, it chanced the imbecile boy died, and was buried under the snow in the churchyard. The monks, being very much concerned about his soul, went to the grave the day after the burial to pray for him. When they arrived there, behold! in the snow on the lonely grave there blossomed in fair red roses the imbecile boy's only prayer, "I love God!"

Then the monks were abashed and understood the reproof.

Monasticism with its monks and monasteries is not the vital element in the world to-day that it once was, but in its time it was a mighty institution that did vast service to the age in which it flourished. As Emerton, the historian, says: "We must learn to judge men and institutions by the use they had in the day in which they belonged, and not by the use they might have for us in these better times."

If we take this noble attitude of mind, we shall be able to look back at Europe in the centuries following Charlemagne's reign, and see her, toiling on through

the night of troubled times to the dawn of a glorious destiny, to the achievement of the Brotherhood of Man; for that is God's ultimate intention for the world, and no matter how man may try to circumvent that aim by strifes and wars, it most surely will come to pass—

— that one divine, far-off event,
To which the whole creation moves.

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